

PART 15

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THE GREAT WAR. **I WAS THERE!**

UNDYING MEMORIES OF 1914-1918

Edited by
**SIR JOHN
HAMMERTON**

Editor of
WORLD WAR 1914-1918

Writer of
FORGOTTEN MEN
The Famous War Film

**MANY HUNDREDS OF
UNPUBLISHED PHOTOS**



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With Acknowledgements to Authors and Publishers

WEEK by week we acknowledge here our indebtedness to the many authors and publishers without whose courteous permission to reprint selected pages from the books written and published by them the compilation of the present work could not have been achieved. In our volumes as finally bound these acknowledgements will be repeated in the preliminary pages.

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Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

John Carpenter House, London, E.C.4

THE variety of the interest in war-time experiences is almost unlimited and is certainly very surprising, even to me. If I were to attempt to classify in these "Leaves" the different types of Service experiences about which my readers have already written to me, I should need practically the whole of this Note-Book for the series of headings alone that would be required. Experiences vary from the Private of the "P.B.I." to the General commanding Brigade and Division, from Leading-Seaman to Rear-Admiral, from submarine hunters and minesweepers to men who hunted the enemy in the upper air, and many other classes of experiences that I cannot recount.

SIMILARLY, there are those who want to read and re-read experiences of themselves and other units on some part or other of the various Fronts, those who want to meet again in person or by letter individual comrades, and yet others who form members of the yearly Pilgrimages to the battlefields which are still so popular and so very well attended. I even have the case of one enthusiast of the Mons Retreat, who, as I noted in this page in Part 8, was inspired by our special colour picture map of the great Retreat to visit the country again by car. This was Mr. F. S. Yates (late Private, Regimental No. 5411, 2nd Battalion South Staffs Regiment), who now writes to me from Chingford saying that he carried out his proposed trip to France and has been over almost every inch of the ground. He says:

"What a glorious trip, pictures now on paper that have been in my mind's eye for years, following Lieutenant (now Captain) Arnold Gyde's advance from Iron to Mons (Iron was my starting point, because we arrived there by train from Le Havre), back from Mons nearly to Paris, via Landrecies, Le Cateau, St. Quentin, and Soissons, midnight sentry duty, password was — yes, I still remember, and then across the Marne and to the Aisne, glorious rest and sleep, then round by train to Ypres, and into the Salient, farthest advanced point, and then Poperinghe, Béthune, La Bassée, Festubert, Givenchy. Our gallant Major was killed at Festubert our Sammy we called him. What a

wonderful tale he told us in the spring of 1914 at Aldershot about praying for War—well, we got it good and plenty. I've got his photo. I've several photographs of almost all the places. I've talked to M. Georges Licope, Mons Museum Manager (I have his autograph). I've snaps of a pill-box and my car at Festubert the Mill at Iron and numerous others."

It is extremely gratifying to think that the excellent photographs of I WAS THERE should have inspired so varied and remarkable an itinerary.

THE old army spirit comes out very noticeably in many of my letters, and I could hardly have a better example than one which I recently received from ex-Corporal J. T. B. Craig, of Glasgow, the wearer of a Military Medal. He tells me how greatly, as a soldier, he appreciates our book and, like many another ex-Service man, wishes it "best luck." Like all my correspondents, Corporal Craig keenly appreciates the essential value of the "I Was There" basis of our work:

"As an ex-Service man I am reading the series, which I thoroughly enjoy each week and follow carefully. It is all so thoroughly told, knowing all the different corners, as I was a Bombardier-Signaller with D Battery 50th Bde. of the 9th Scottish Division, commanded by the Honourable Major Thelluson. I was with them at Cuinchy ready for the Loos attack on that memorable day when the officer in charge, a Mr. Barton from London, and Cpl. Reason of Camberwell and I, after pegging wires in the trenches night and day, went over the top. But going over and fixing our wire first, the Corporal fell mortally wounded, then the Officer slightly; but although I managed to get both away out of No Man's Land, he died too. I had the gruesome job on the Sun., 26th Sept., to go up and identify the two bodies out of about 500 Highlanders composed of H.L.I., Seaforth and Argylls. But I managed. Strange to say, I had covered my Officer's face with a handkerchief with the Artillery Badge engraved on it, so we buried both in Cambrin Cemetery. And a fortnight later the Officer's servant, Gunner Gable, who had helped to bury him, was killed, and we buried him beside his master. Now, I was over the battlefields two months ago and was disappointed at not finding their graves. I left my Div., the 9th Scottish, after being wounded on the Somme, but returned six months later and joined the 66th Div."

HE says that although he went through all the Passchendaele, St. Quentin, and March Retreat fighting, and was even firing at 10.50 a.m. on November 11, 1918, he has never met any of his old comrades, and, like many others, he

[Continued in page iii of this wrapper



THEY DID NOT ALL COME BACK THIS WAY

These are men of the King's Liverpool Regiment, forming part of the 55th Division, passing along a communication trench on their way to the front line. This division (the West Lancashire T.F.) supplied reinforcements to the B.E.F. until the last of its battalions had left England. In November 1915 the Army Council authorized its reformation as a division in France. This was completed in January 1916, and the division took part in the Somme battles, forming part of the 15th Corps of the 4th Army at that time.

Imperial War Museum



FOR ONCE IT WAS A PICNIC IN THE TRENCHES

These Canadian soldiers are eating their midday meal in comparative comfort and safety. Such well-sandbagged trenches, with dug-outs handy, were usual in the front by the beginning of 1916. The men are wearing steel helmets, which were worn by Canadian troops in action for the first time on April 4, 1916, fifty per company having been issued to the 6th Canadian Brigade. They are not only army rations that these men are eating but some extras they have provided for themselves.



HOW A COLLIER BECAME A 'Q' SHIP

It was in October 1915 that the collier, the Loderer, seen above, underwent her transformation at Devonport to become the mystery ship Q5, renamed the Farnborough to conceal further her real identity. On her deck she carried twelve-pounders and other guns, all skilfully hidden in dummy superstructures, which could be instantly removed when the moment for action arrived. The gun positions and various disguises of two types of tramp steamers converted into "Q" ships are shown below.

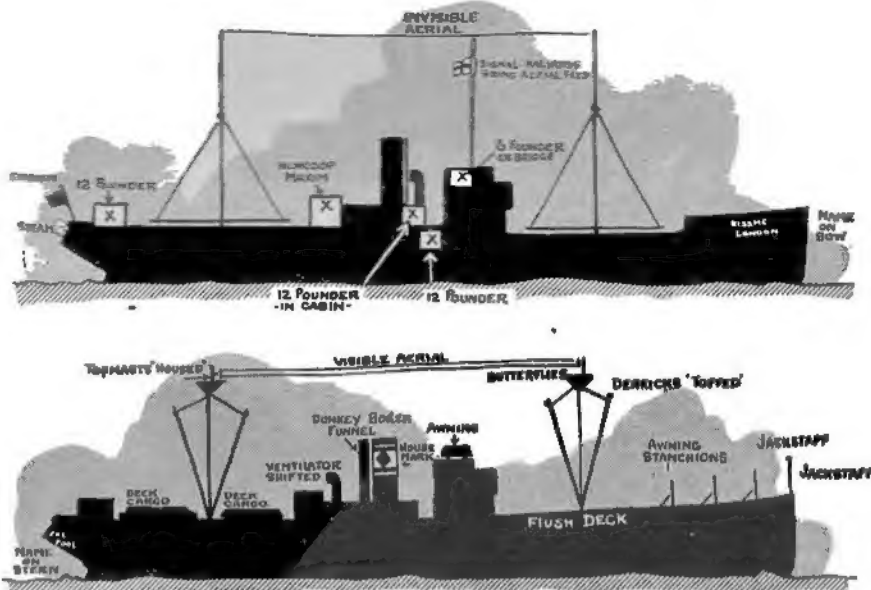
Photograph and diagrams, courtesy of Admiral Gordon Campbell

go after another prey, as he fired a shot at us which fell just short of the magazine, a matter of a few feet.

He was now about 800 yards off, showing full length, and although the range was a little bit greater than I wished, the time had come to open fire before he might touch off our magazines. I therefore blew my whistle. At this signal the White Ensign flew at the masthead, the wheel-house and sideports came down with a clatter, the hen-coop collapsed; and in a matter of seconds three 12-pounder guns, the Maxim, and rifles were firing as hard as they could.

THE submarine had been successfully decoyed to a suitable position with his lid open and gun manned. Everything now depended on the accuracy of the fire; but the target was a comparatively small one, and we had no rangefinders to help us, so that the distance of the target was reckoned by eye. The fire was accurate, and before the submarine could get closed down again we had hit him several times as he slowly submerged. In all, 21 rounds were fired from the three 12-pounders, one gun getting off 13 rounds. The Maxim and rifles wasted no time in getting off some 200 rounds at the personnel on the deck of the submarine, who were manning the gun, but now rapidly sought shelter inside the submarine.

As soon as he had submerged and there was nothing more to fire at, we steamed at full speed to the spot where he had gone down, for at the moment there was nothing actually to show whether he had been destroyed or not, although we knew we had hit him, as he had closed his conning tower before diving. Two depth-charges were therefore dropped, and almost simultaneously the submarine, that had obviously been



trying to rise, came up nearly perpendicular, touching our bottom as it did so. We were still steaming ahead when the submarine passed down our side a few yards off, and it could now be seen that in addition to a periscope having been shot off there was a big rent in the bows.

Our after-gun was leaving nothing to chance and put a few more rounds in at point-blank range. A couple more depth-charges were released, and the surface of the sea became covered with oil and small pieces of wood—but there was no living soul.

This boat, it was ascertained afterwards, was U.68, and by destroying her

before she got to her hunting-ground, we had done exactly what we set out for. The great feeling of rejoicing and relief to all on board showed itself in the whole crew rushing to the bridge and cheering. . . . When all were present, I read the "Prayer of Thanksgiving for Victory" from the Book of Common Prayer, followed by three cheers for the King, and then all went back to "cruising stations," but not before one of the wags had produced the gramophone and put on the record of "Down among the dead men let him lie."

POET'S MEMORIES of TRENCH WAR

'A Dirty, Bloodthirsty, Wearisome Place'

by Edmund Blunden



AUTHOR-AT-ARMS

Mr. Blunden was one of the many great scholars and men of literature who were educated at Christ's Hospital, which has had its home at Horsham since 1902, so that it is particularly appropriate that he should have served in the Royal Sussex Regiment.

THERE was enough to occupy a commanding officer in the Cuinchy trenches, without lighting raids. It was as dirty, bloodthirsty and wearisome a place as could well be found in ordinary warfare; many mines had been exploded there, and tunnelling was still going on. We had scarcely found out the names of the many trenches, boyaux and saps when midnight was suddenly maddened with the thump and roar of a new mine blown under our front companies. The shock was like a blow on the heart; our dug-out swayed, there were startled eyes and voices. I was sent up, as soon as it appeared that this disaster was on our front, with some stretcher-bearers, and as we hurried along the puzzling communication trenches I began to understand the drift of the war; for a deluge of heavy shells was rushing into the ground all round, baffling any choice of movement, and the blackness billowed with blasts of crashing sound and flame. Rain (for Nature came to join the dance) glistened in the shocks of dizzy light on the trench bags and woodwork, and bewilderment was upon my small party, who stoopingly hurried onward; we endured a barrage, but we were not wanted after all.

BROTHERS should not join the same battalion. When we were at the place where some of the wounded had been collected under the best shelter to be found, I was struck deep by the misery of a boy, whom I knew and liked well; he was half-crying, half-exhorting over a stretcher whence came the clear but

weakened voice of his brother, wounded almost to death, waiting his turn to be carried down. Not much can be said at such times; but a known voice perhaps conveyed some comfort in the inhuman night which covered us. In this battalion, brothers had frequently enlisted together; the effect was too surely a culmination of suffering.

THE casualties caused by the mine were nearly sixty. Cuinchy (which the battalion was proud to hold, believing it a sector hitherto allotted solely to Regular troops) was a slaughter-yard. My ignorance carried me through it with less ado than I can now understand. The front line, which C Company in a few nights occupied, was in all ways singular. It ran through an extensive brickfield, with many massive four-square brickstacks, fused into solidity; of these historic strange monuments about

a dozen lay in our lines, and about the same number in the German lines. The brickstacks, such of them as were occupied, were approached by insecure, narrow windings through a wicked clay; our domestic arrangements naturally grouped themselves on the home side of them, and no less naturally the Germans at their discretion belaboured them and their precincts with high explosive.

The deep dug-outs behind them were not quite deep enough, but to anyone arriving there the sight of a smoky black stairway down, with equipments suspended like trophies at the entrance, was better than what Moses saw from Pisgah. From the gap in the sandbags above, a bulky benevolent figure, reminiscent of the police force, emerges with a frying-pan, or a canvas bucket, and grins respectfully. "Corporal Head, how dare you laugh at my huge stick? Isn't it helping me through this filth to a



NOTORIOUS CHEMIST'S SHOP OF CUINCHY

The shop seen above stood on the Béthune-La Bassée Road, which was used by the ration and relief parties for the "Canal Sector" and "Brickstacks" during the battle of Loos, and was a familiar landmark. The shop was at one time suspected of harbouring a spy because of the heavy casualties among reliefs, and there is no doubt that the underground electric power cables running across No Man's Land were tapped near this spot.

Photo, Lieut-Col. Graham Seton Hutchison

couple of hours' rest?" "Well, I *hope* you'll get your rest, sir. Here they come again." Just in time; the most malevolent flattening crash follows one down the steps: one's body tingles; the candles are out. This is the first line of a long monotonous poem, but we are inside, and can wait for the end. The roof-beam may be cracked, but that need not be one's only thought. Who's got the matches?

AN 'AIRY DEVIL HOVERED'

I HAVE heard it ruled that the minenwerfer was unimportant, and its effect principally (to use the obtuse English of this subject) moral. But in stationary war it seemed to me to make large holes not only in the nervous but also in the trench system. My first glimpse of what I likened to a small black cask wobbling over and over in the air at a great height above us produced from me the remark: "What a large rifle grenade!" The cask pounced down with speed and a corner of the brickstack flew into a violence of dust and smoke; but meanwhile other "airy devils hovered," and Corporal Rowland, who had smilingly corrected my error about rifle grenades, watched with as keen an eye as ever faced fast bowler, and scuttled one way or the other.

There was nothing for it but to copy experience, and experience was nothing but a casual protection, for one of our soundest officers was killed at the entrance to the brickstacks. I still hear the voices of his friends, sharing this news, shocked and sad. A problem also recurs to me, which became for a time a bad dream; in the narrow slit, already knocked nearly shapeless, and sloppy with rain, which led from our company headquarters towards the rear, a large "minny" fell but did not explode. Something must be done about it, quickly—for traffic must pass, day and night. I suppose that this dud was presently set off by an electrical charge, but it had an awkward effect on a person expecting to pass that way—the only way.

MEANWHILE, our trench protection was most meagre. The front trench, then marked at intervals with large location-boards reading (from our side) somehow thus: I. d. 7, was shallow and uncommanding. I could not understand its connections, one part with another. Probably nobody else who was there could. Saps ran out like thin arms reaching towards the enemy, but whether they or the fragmentary fire-step from which they emerged formed our chief bulwark, I did not know. We held Jerusalem Crater, an enormous hole in brown exploded soil with a

pool in the bottom of it; we held it, but our post was at the bottom of it, too.

The sentry had to lie down behind a few sacks of clay and glare with intensity into his periscope. One reached him through a burrow under our parapet, a sort of culvert, a heroic ingenuity; if one lay long beside him, one of the periodical releases of stick-bombs from the overhanging German side of the crater would reward such patience.

AT night our patrols inquired perilously into the farther side of this crater. I went. There was nothing to be discovered but fractured earth, old iron and anxiety. We even dragged ourselves to the possible lair of our opponents, but found no person nor prepared position. Clearly the German habit was to crawl out in the day and throw the bombs from "no fixed abode."

Sometimes the bomber would show himself, head and shoulders, in an unexpected position out of contempt or daredevilry. He was always reported to be of gigantic stature—no mere

Saxon youth. It was here that one of our officers sent back a note to Lytton: "Germans have thrown six bombs into Jerusalem Crater. Shall we throw any back?"

Now this was the tendency of our brigade; one's mind was more filled with one's relation to superior beings behind us than to those who were not losing the war in front of us. Such questions as these: "Have your men had porridge this morning?" "Have you your Gas Message in your pocket?" and "What is the number of Loan Boots in your company?" were never far away from the young officer, even as a German bomb burst beside him; they impeded, shall I say, his "offensive spirit." This awkwardness pervaded trench war. Even when our headquarters were wildly calling for information and co-operation on the stormy occasion of our mine, an urgent message came in demanding an immediate return of the number of picks and shovels on our sector, or something still wider—the usual "Please expedite."

SANDBAGS AMONG THE 'BRICKSTACKS'

For four years of the war Quinchy and its neighbourhood were in the front line, and its great brickstacks, as related in this chapter, formed part of the British line. Sandbags were, however, a better protection than brickstacks, and the trench seen below in September 1915 has been strengthened by what was the best defence of all. It is occupied by men of the South Staffordshire Regiment.

Imperial War Museum



Who that had been there for but a few hours could ever forget the sullen sorcery and mad lineaments of Cuinchy? A mining sector, as this was, never wholly lost the sense of hovering horror. That day I arrived in it the shimmering rising heat blurred the scene, but a trouble was at once discernible, if indescribable, also rising from the ground. Over Coldstream Lane, the chief communication trench, deep red poppies, blue and white cornflowers and darnel thronged the way to destruction; the yellow cabbage-flowers thickened here and there in sickening brilliance. Giant teasels made a thicket beyond.

Then the ground became torn and vile, the poisonous breath of fresh explosions skulked all about, and the mud which choked the narrow passages stank as one pulled through it, and through the twisted, disused wires running mysteriously onward in such festooning complexity, that we even suspected some of them ran into the Germans' line and were used to betray us.

THEY HAD WON ALL THEY WANTED

These are men of the 1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, the "Fighting Fifth," after going into action in the St. Eloi sector near Ypres. On the night of March 26-27, 1916, they had been lying out on muddy ground without greatcoats, suffering great hardship, but when the moment came to advance at 4.15 a.m. they reached their objective and held it until they were relieved on the following night. Here they are seen after the battle trying on their souvenirs of German helmets and gas masks, no less elated than their comrades seen in pages 596-7. The man in the foreground has a slot signalling apparatus.

Much lime was wanted at Cuinchy, and that had its ill savour, and often its horrible meaning. There were many spots mouldering on, like those legendary bloodstains on castle floors which will not be washed away.

In our front line under the fire-step, and indeed now chiefly propping it up, were numerous cylinders of gas, installed for the Loos battle, but undischarged. These could not easily be dug out, and promised additional inconvenience or murder at all hours of shelling. I had been talking on this and similar matters one evening with Corporal Rowland, when, he, having gone away to some minor job, I heard a dozen bombs burst very loud. What to do I did not know: I was in a disused bay alone. I was hurrying to find someone else when he came running along, saying that they were German bombs. We both waited on the parapet, with our own bombs ready, but after a few more abrupt thunderings the episode ceased. It

turned out that some Germans had tried to raid our right company. In such a dark night it was not easy to be sure of that wandering front line.

At four o'clock one afternoon our tunnellers, suddenly locating German mining near their own, put up a defensive mine between the two lines. All had been drowsy till some pale-faced engineers with lengths of fuse in their hands came past, flinging their brief news over their shoulders at us.

Now for it: a big drum-tap underground, and the earth heaved up to a great height in solid crags and clods, with devolving clouds of dust; there was the flame and roar, then this dark pillar in the sunlight, then a twittering, a hissing and thudding as it collapsed.

At once the new crater was raked with machine-gun fire and blasted with trench mortars and rifle grenades; neither side wanted it, but neither would let the other set foot in it. Several of us, highly excited, regardless of machine-gun bullets, stood up on the fire-step staring into the confusion and trying our longest throws with Mills bombs; the smoke and dust hung long and swallowed up hundreds of such missiles. At length the affair died out; dixies of tea went round at the usual hour and easily became more important than the blowing of a mine.





THROUGH THREE WARS

Before playing his part in the World War Captain Dorling had seen active service with the Naval Contingent in the South African War and in China in 1900, including the relief of Peking.

I AM never likely to forget Easter Monday, April 24, 1916. The depredations of enemy submarines in the English Channel and the southern portion of the North Sea were becoming a menace. The barrages of mines and mine-nets between Dover and the French coast had done little to prevent U-boats from proceeding down-Channel and doing their worst. Many of the marauders, minelayers among them, hailed from Zeebrugge, the Germans having a large submarine base about ten miles up the canal at Bruges.

It had been decided to enclose the whole of the Flanders coast, from Dunkerque to the Scheldt, in a sort of ring fence about forty miles long. It was to be composed of double lines of mines backed up by mine-nets, the lines being laid parallel to the shore at a distance of between twelve and fifteen miles. At either end they would curve inwards towards the land.

The many thousands of mines would take some weeks to lay, the minelayers from Sheerness having to make several trips and being able only to deposit them at night. The placing of the nets would be undertaken by a whole fleet of little fishing-drifters, each vessel being able to lay 1,000 yards of net in one operation.

When this Belgian coast barrage was finally complete, it was intended that it should be patrolled by monitors and destroyers throughout the summer.

Dover, with the great amount of escort and patrol work that had ever to be done, was always short of destroyers. So, about two days before the Belgian coast operation was timed

FIVE MILES of BATTERIES FIRED at ME!

Destroyer's Crowded Hour Off Belgian Coast

by 'Taffrail'

ONE of the best-known and most entertaining writers on naval matters uses the pseudonym "Taffrail." This is Captain H. T. Dorling, D.S.O., R.N. (retd.), a naval officer who saw much active service during the Great War. The spirited action which he describes below took place off the Belgian coast in April 1916 when he, as a Lieutenant-Commander, was in command of H.M.S. Murray engaged in protecting minesweepers and minelayers

to start, a division of four M class destroyers from the Harwich Force were sent to assist. These four ships were the Medea, Commander George L. D. Gibbs; Melpomene, Lieutenant-Commander Hubert De Burgh; Milne, Lieutenant-Commander Hugh R. Troup; and Murray, Lieutenant-Commander Taprell Dorling.

On the afternoon of April 23, the minelayers Princess Margaret, Orvieto, Biarritz and Paris sailed from Sheerness under the escort of eight other destroyers from Harwich. The minelayers were all converted merchant-vessels, the first two being passenger liners. The little Biarritz and Paris will be familiar to many cross-Channel passengers.

They arrived off the Belgian coast soon after 4 a.m. on April 24, and started to lay their mines, completing the job at 7.30 and then returning to Sheerness to embark more. We, the party from Dunkerque—my own ship being the Murray, detached thither from Harwich—sailed before dawn.

PLEASURE STEAMER ARMADA

WE formed quite a respectable armada. In the van went six paddle minesweepers: ex-pleasure steamers which, in peace, took seasick trippers at so much a time between London, Southend, Margate, Clacton, Brighton, Worthing, and a dozen other watering-places. Being of very shallow draught, they were useful craft, and, with their sweeps out, were clearing a way for the rest of us to pass. We were, so to speak, treading on virgin ground.

Behind the sweepers came the four M class destroyers, steaming, for us, at the dismal speed of 9 knots. Astern of us again, fading into the distance on the horizon, came the long lines of ordinary little fishing-drifters who were to lay the mine-nets. They were

manned for the most part by their ordinary fishing crews and commanded by their own skippers, each division being led by an R.N.R. lieutenant, and the whole bunch by an "admiral" in the shape of a retired captain R.N. They had homely names: Girl Ethel, Clover Bank, Au Fait, Boy Charlie, Try Again, and the like.

To return, however, to the morning of April 24, 1916.

Our day had started at about 2.30 a.m. We were to be out all night, the whole of which I must spend on the bridge. So at about 2 p.m., as there was nothing particular going on, I retired to the chart house for a nap, leaving the officer of the watch in charge.

AT about a quarter to three I was suddenly awakened by a messenger pulling at my shoulder, the ringing of the alarm gongs, and the rattle of the engine-room telegraphs as the ship increased speed.

"It's enemy destroyers, sir!" said the man, his voice very excited.

It was. Arriving on the bridge with a rush, I could see, about 9,000 yards away towards the shore, the slim shapes of three grey vessels steaming in our direction. They were travelling at full speed, throwing up the water on either side of their sharp stems in white, plume-like bow-waves. They were evidently about to attack our drifters at work on their nets about a mile shoreward of where we were patrolling.

The Medea, Murray, and Melpomene were in company, in the order named, the Milne having been detached to hunt for a submarine. Our men were at action stations and the guns ready. We were working up to full speed with the stokehold fans roaring, and followed the Medea as she swung round and made for the nearest gap in the line of

mine-nets. The waves at our sterns mounted higher and higher as we gradually increased to 30 knots. It was wonderful to feel the old ship really moving at last. Ashton, the engineer-lieutenant commander, was driving her all he knew.

THE enemy, seeing our approach, altered course until they were steering about west-south-west, parallel with the coast. The range dropped rapidly to 8,000 yards—to 7,500. Then I suddenly saw the orange flashes rippling down their sides. It was curious to realize that we were being fired at, that even now a covey of hostile shell were driving through the air towards us. I felt not exactly nervous, but intensely excited, anxious to close the range.

Their first salvos fell a good 600 yards short. Their second splashed into the sea all round us, projectiles seeming to whirl and to whine in all directions.

We were not hit, but the shooting was too close to be pleasant.

Steaming at full speed through the gap in the nets and past a drifter reeling drunkenly in our wash, we turned on to a slightly converging course to the enemy at a range of about 6,500 yards. It seemed absurdly long, the targets very small, impossible for our guns to hit.

The *Medea's* three 4-inch flamed out as she straightened out on her course. We steamed through the brown haze of her cordite smoke with the sweetish smell of it in our nostrils.

"Shall we commence, sir?" asked the sub, the gun control officer.

Intent on conning the ship, I nodded over my shoulder. There was a crash, a sheet of flame, and the hot stench of burning cordite as our guns opened fire.

My recollections of what happened during the next thirty-five minutes or so are rather hazy. I was far too busy conning the ship and watching the

next ahead to take much notice of details. But in between the reports of our own and our neighbours' guns one heard the "whee-w-whhe-w" of passing shell, and a peculiar purring sound as they fell short and ricocheted. The sea seemed to be vomiting spray fountains, almost as if some giant was flinging handful after handful of huge pebbles into a pond. It seemed surprising that we were not hit.

OCCASIONALLY, glancing momentarily towards the enemy, soon at a range of about 5,000 yards, I noticed shell splashes all round them—comforting, very comforting. We were using every ounce of steam we had to close in to decisive range. The Germans, however, were steaming as fast, or faster, zig-zagging to avoid being hit, gradually edging away towards the land.

We saw in the after part of the second ship in the enemy line a dull reddish glow, a cloud of black smoke, and a rush of white steam. One of our shells had hit and burst. Her speed dropped. Her friends closed in and started to circle round her.

We had been in action for nearly forty minutes, and by this time were well inside the line of our drifters.

A TORPEDO HAS FOUND ITS MARK

As described in this chapter, excellent work was done by the British destroyers in the North Sea, and the Harwich flotilla kept up its patrol duties even in the heaviest weather. The waters navigated were dangerous, for German submarines were always on the watch for their most formidable enemy—the destroyers. Below is the scene when one of them had been caught. It shows H.M.S. *Viking* struck by a torpedo on April 3, 1916, when her oil tanks were set on fire. H.M.S. *Zulu* is standing by to save the crew.

Abrahams, Plymouth



Indeed, when we afterwards worked it out on the chart, we discovered we had reached a position within about 10,000 yards of the shore. I recollect that the sun was behind us, so that every detail of the low, sandy coast was visible to the naked eye. Looking through glasses, one could even count the windows in the buildings on the sea-front at Blankenberghe.

SOMETHING ACCOMPLISHED

WE had done what we set out to do which was to prevent the enemy from interfering with our drifters. There was no sense in going closer. Our helms went over. We started to steam out to sea as fast as we could leg it. Then the fun began.

The eight miles of sand-dunes from Knocke through Zeebrugge to Blankenberghe contained, as we afterwards discovered, fourteen batteries mounting fifty-four guns—four 12-inch, eight 11-inch, eight 8-inch, twelve 6-inch, four 5-inch, and eighteen 4-inch. I will not pretend that every weapon of this varied and formidable collection of artillery opened fire upon us on that unforgettable afternoon. I will confine myself to saying that the moment we turned our sterns towards the land, at least five miles of the coast started to wink in and out with red gun flashes. Within a few seconds we were receiving the full attention of a fair proportion of those fifty-four pieces of ordnance varying in size from 12-inch downwards. We could tell that from the size of the splashes—waterspouts.

People say that one cannot hear a shell until it has passed; but it was certainly not true on this occasion.

They roared at us like trains tearing through a station—whistled, whined, hummed. They splashed and burst on striking the water, the splinters driving in all directions. Geysers of all sizes and shapes leapt out of the sea all round us, their white plumes reaching higher than our masthead.

I SAW a great upheaval of water rear itself out of the sea within three feet of our stern—waited for a crash as it came in through the side to wreck the steering gear. But no—nothing happened; the ship still steamed on.

A fountain leapt out of the water under our bows and cast its shadow across the bridge and forecastle. We actually steamed through the tumbling spray of it, suddenly to find ourselves wet and blinded and coughing with the bitter smell of high explosive—rather like the smell of an expended squib. The blue sea was pock-marked with large, circular areas where shell had pitched, with here and there patches of



BRITISH MINE THAT WENT ASHORE

These three Germans have found a strange object on the sands of Belgium. It is a British mine that has broken from its moorings and drifted ashore. As early as April 24, 1915, a double row of mines 15 miles long and a barrage of over 13 miles of mined nets had been laid off Zeebrugge in three and a half hours. The Murray, Captain Dorling's destroyer, was among the escort of the minelayers which laid this minefield.

scummy-looking discoloration where others had burst. They looked exactly as if someone had been emptying large buckets of ashes. It was, supremely, wildly exciting, but I cannot pretend that I liked it. Nobody liked it. If one of those great things hit us and exploded, we might crumple in two, burst open.

A THUDDING clang and a quiver warned us that we had been hit somewhere fairly close to the bridge. Personally, I waited for what seemed minutes for a gout of flame and a shower of splinters. They never came. Looking forward, I saw a ragged hole in the steel deck of the forecastle. The shell had driven its way through two decks and passed out through the ship's side about eight feet above the waterline without exploding.

If that fuse had been up to its work, the whole of our forecastle guns' crews must have been killed or wounded. As it was, we merely had a large, irregular-shaped hole above the waterline which, for the time being, was plugged with a hammock. Within a foot of me as I write is a jagged lump of steel mounted on a mahogany plinth, with a little brass plate bearing an inscription. It is a small piece of the riding bitt of the Murray removed by that 6-inch shell.

The whistling, howling, and screeching continued, and the spray fountains persisted.

"God damn those sons of bitches!" I heard the coxswain mutter.

I thought that perhaps a splinter had found lodgement in Chief Petty-Officer William Ewles's well-favoured anatomy. But it was nothing so serious. The top of our bridge was uncovered. The wind



SUCH CRAFT WERE NO LUXURY SHIPS

The life of the destroyer crews on patrol in the North Sea, as told by "Taffrail," was a hard one. Above is the scene on the deck of a destroyer in heavy weather. As destroyers ploughed at high speed through choppy seas clouds of spray swept their decks from bow to stern, so that they were all what sailors term a "wet ship." In the foreground is a torpedo tube and behind it a circular life-raft. In the photograph below the conditions are easier. On the deck of a destroyer off the Belgian coast some of the crew are taking a siesta beside the torpedo tube.





THE GERMANS DIDN'T LIKE MONITORS

The operations of the British monitors and destroyers off the coast of Belgium were particularly troublesome to the Germans, for many men and guns were needed for the defensive shore batteries. Above is one of the monitors which, carrying guns up to 18-in., could throw shells far inshore. Above, the crew of a monitor are watching an Allied aeroplane. Below, a destroyer is throwing a smoke screen such as is described by "Taffrail" (Capt. Dorling) in this chapter. To produce smoke screens, chemicals were discharged from special burners on the after deck or through the funnels.

p2

Humphrey Doel



of a passing projectile had merely removed his cap. He looked at me with a wry smile, his face, streaked with perspiration, rather redder than usual. "Strewth, sir!" he said. "This is no place for a married man!"

It wasn't.

Soon after the shore guns had opened we had started to dodge this way and that. At the same time, I had signalled to the engine-room to "Make smoke." In point of fact, in my agitation I had pressed the gong once too often or too little, which meant "Negative make smoke." Ashton, however, had his head up the engine-room hatch, and realized what was wanted. Before long the transparent haze at our funnel-tops started to darken. A few seconds later a cloud of inky blackness, so thick and so black that it seemed as if one could have walked upon it, was pouring out of the funnels and rolling away astern.

LUCKILY IT WAS A DUD

THINK that it saved us. Still dodging, we withdrew under the smoke screen. We had been in action with the enemy destroyers from 3 to 3.40. It was now 3.50.

Then we noticed the Melpomene, which had been in action with us, gradually dropping astern. We put it down to a temporary loss of steam which could soon be rectified. It was not until she made a signal asking for help that we realized that she had been badly hit.

We were told afterwards that at about 3.40 she had been hit in the engine-room by a ricocheting 4.1-inch shell, one of the last fired by the enemy destroyers before we broke out of action. This projectile, entering the ship sideways, had happily not burst. If it had, the ship would probably have been lost. As it was, it made a hole in the ship's side below the waterline, through which the water poured in a torrent. The engine-room filled up and the men were finally forced to abandon it, but for twenty minutes the ship had still managed to steam with her turbines awash, and then entirely under water.

HER speed dropped fast. At last she came to a standstill. The sea was flat calm, and the Milne, seeing the Melpomene's predicament, at once went alongside the port side of her damaged sister with the idea of towing her into safety.

All the destroyers of the Harwich Force carried two shackles—twenty-five fathoms—of chain-cable aft ready for shackling on to the end of a towing-wire to assist a damaged consort. On this occasion, however, through no fault of her captain's, the Milne had bad luck. A loop of the cable was cropped by

accident over her port propeller while it was being shackled on to the Melpomene's wire. The revolving screw caught up the loop and tangled it round the propeller shaft and "A" bracket until it was tied in a tight knot and the propeller came to a standstill. One of her screws was thus out of action until she went into dry-dock.

The Medea, Commander G. L. D. Gibbs, signalling to us to go ahead to find a way out through the mine-nets, thereupon went alongside the starboard side of the Melpomene to tow her clear, the three ships thus forming a sandwich with the Melpomene in the middle.

FOR twenty-five minutes or so they steamed thus, while the Murray went ahead of them to find a gap. But enemy destroyers had seen what had happened, for at 4.30, looking astern, we sighted their white bow-waves again as they steamed towards us at full speed.

From that moment all sense of time seemed to vanish. I recollect signalling to the Medea to tell her the Germans were approaching, and the Medea replying, "Please show us the gap in the nets." I went ahead, hailed a drifter, found out where the gap was, and told the others.

The next thing was a series of gun-flashes from the enemy, then about 8,000 yards astern—and several pillars of silvery spray in the water all round the three destroyers tied in a bunch. They must have presented a tempting target.

More salvos fell, rather closer this time. Before long someone would be hit.

There was only one thing to do, and that quickly. The Murray must make a smoke-screen under the sterns of the other three. I did not feel very happy about it. It would be a matter of ourselves alone against three Germans until the only other undamaged ship, the Medea, came into action with us.

OUR telegraphs rattled over to full speed, the helm went over and, signalling to the engine-room for smoke, we dashed past the three ships still lashed together. Our heavy wash caused them considerable inconvenience and carried away some of their wires; but even as we passed more clusters of shell fell about them.

Straightening out under their sterns, and pouring a dense cloud of black smoke into our funnels, we opened fire on the approaching enemy at a range of about 6,000 yards. We saw the splashes of our falling shell somewhere near them, whereupon they again turned to a course more or less parallel to the coast and transferred their attention to us. It was distinctly unpleasant until the

Medea cast off from the Melpomene and came into action ahead of us. Two against three was not quite such long odds. To give the Melpomene and Milne a chance of getting well clear, it was necessary that we should drive the Germans well in towards the coast. This we proceeded to do, while a monitor farther out to sea, the Prince Eugene, cocked her 12-inch guns in the air and let them have a dose of shrapnel, until they were out of range.

Our second little battle lasted from about 4.40 to 4.45, at ranges of between 5,000 to 8,000 yards. I think the enemy were hit once or twice, though they never succeeded in hitting us. Firing very fast, they seemed to be missing by fathoms.

IT WAS A NASTY SIGHT

IT was when we turned to come out again, shortly before 5 o'clock, that the shore batteries again let loose. We adopted our old tactics, zigzagging and making thick smoke, and, though plenty of large projectiles sailed down into the sea all round us, to raise their terrifying waterspouts, we were never actually hit.

The Medea was not so lucky. I saw a flash of reddish golden flame and a puff of black smoke as a shell struck fair and square on her quarter-deck. Then another struck close alongside the funnels. I waited with my heart in my mouth, thinking that she must inevitably be damaged—that we should have to do a sort of "death or glory" exploit under a withering fire and tow her out of action.

To my heartfelt relief, she did not wobble in her course. She steamed on at full speed, and in another five or six minutes it was all over and we were safe.

THE Medea had been hit three times.

A shell, bursting in the wardroom where men were handing up ammunition to the after gun, killed two poor fellows and wounded several more. It had also caused damage to her stern, while rendering the wardroom uninhabitable. I went on board her when we arrived in harbour. It was a nasty sight, blood splashed over the deck and the white enamelled bulkhead, the ship's side perforated in places like a colander. How the detonation of that shell did not explode the magazine and wreck the ship I do not pretend to know.

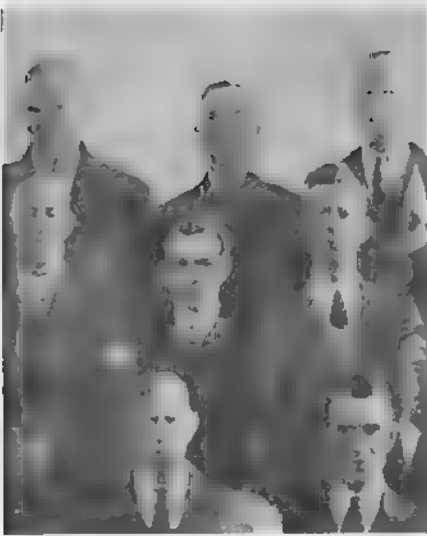
As for ourselves, we were merely hit once by that single 6-inch shell during the first phase of the action. That we were not struck more often was due to sheer good luck, to Ashton's smoke screens, and to the fact that we zigzagged like a snipe. Fully five miles of coast had concentrated its guns upon us.

I Saw DUBLIN in REVOLT

When Irish Rebels Fled from Flames

by Desmond Ryan

To add to the difficulties with which during the year 1916 Great Britain was surrounded on all sides, open revolt broke out in Dublin on Easter Monday, April 24. The rebel Sinn Feiners seized the principal public buildings and declared the Irish Republic. Anticipated help from Germany was not forthcoming, and the rising was suppressed after much bloodshed. Mr. Desmond Ryan, author of "Remembering Sion" and "The Invisible Army," was a member of the Irish Volunteers. He was imprisoned and released at the end of July 1916



IRISH INSURGENT

Among the three thousand followers of Professor John MacNeill, who engineered the rebellion, was Desmond Ryan. He is seen in the centre of this group, part of a panoramic photograph showing some 300 survivors of the garrison of the Dublin G.P.O. in 1916.

THIS is what happened, told tersely in a note smuggled out of Stafford Detention Barracks after the collapse of the Rising: it was written on a small sheet of paper and slipped into the hand of a visitor, and its merit is that it was a synopsis of several experiences in the General Post Office and the Church Street area.

Within the General Post Office for the Five Days.

The attack on the General Post Office took place at noon. A company of Volunteers armed with pikes, shot-guns and rifles charged the buildings at the ringing command of the gallant officer in charge, disposed of the feeble resistance of the small garrison—inasmuch as the lack of ammunition rendered the guard practically unarmed—laughed at an angry old lady who was disturbed buying some stamps, watched the staff fly pell-mell out, and soon occupied the position.

SIMULTANEOUSLY the following positions were occupied: Lower Castle Yard, Four Courts, Stephen's Green, Jacobs' factory and other places. An attack on Portobello also came off.

One participant relates: "Marched according to orders to Liberty Hall with small company in which I drilled, little expecting to be so soon in arms against the armed forces of Great Britain. Great excitement prevailed and the surrounding area was desolate in appearance. The door is locked. Congestion

of traffic has whetted our curiosity as we marched through the average holiday crowds and soldiers who are strolling with their girls past College Green.

Admitted to Larkin's palace we swarm upstairs. The Volunteers are 'out' and Ireland is rising. It is evident from the excited shouts to keep 'a watch on the railway line' and 'fill all vessels with water.' Rifles and flushed

faces. A feeling of momentary sickness, then wonder.

"An excited youth informs our commander that there are no longer Volunteers or Citizen Army, so Mr. Connolly had said when the row started and the Volunteers had been addressed in front of the Hall, only the Army of the Irish Republic. Commandant Pearse sends down a message to us to proceed to the G.P.O. We hurry

IT WAS ALL THE SAME TO TOMMY

When the Irish rebels fired their first shot outside Dublin Castle on Easter Monday, 1916, they took the authorities completely by surprise, and it was not until the following Wednesday that the advance guards of Territorials and other troops arrived from England to crush the rising. This photograph was taken in Dublin at the time of the revolt, shortly after the Tommies had had a swift encounter with the rebels.

L.N. 4



POBLAChT NA h EIREANN.
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN Is the name of God and of the dead generations, from whom she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland through her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organized and trained her maidens through her secret revolutionary organization the Irish Republican Brotherhood and through her sister's revolutionary organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, MacDonnell perfected her discipline, having absolutely waited for the right moment to strike. She saw seize that moment and was approved by her own comrades in Ireland and by Cabinet allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own resources she strikes in full confidence of victory.

[illegible][illegible]

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God. A God blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that our valour, as well as that of our ally, will dishonour it by cowardice and inability. In this, a proud Nation of Ireland must, by its valour and courage and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of a glorious century to which it is called.

Segment von Fläche α der Projektion der Linsenoberfläche,

THOMAS J. CLARKE.

BRAN Mac DIAMADA. THOMAS MacDONAGH.

P. H. PEARSE.

EAMONN CEARB?

JAMES CONNOLLY

JOSEPH, FLORIAN, KTT

A PREMATURE PROCLAMATION

Before the rebels struck in the city of Dublin, the leaders of Sinn Fein, with extraordinary optimism and confidence, issued the proclamation which is reproduced here. In it the birth of an Irish republic was announced and the people of Ireland were called upon to support the "provisional government." Six days of street fighting ended the signatories' dream, and left behind a trail of death and bitterness.

downstairs and at the double across Abbey Street. 'Hurrah for the Volunteers!' shouts an aged working man. 'Hammer the s—— out the——!' We rush across Princes Street, catching a glimpse of a girl crying and hurrying along, a well-dressed young man beside her. Kids cheer from doorways. A dim crowd up towards the Rotunda."

The narrative continues:

"The G.P.O. windows loom before us, men inside with rifles behind barricaded windows. Our commander's rifle-

butt smashes through glass and wood and breaks. Scramble in and over. shots ring deafeningly in our ears, a cry, 'The Lancers!', and a volley from within to stop those troops who retire, leaving two dead horses behind. Hurry. Locks blown in, men rushed to the roof, to second storey. Sacks, books, typewriters are stuffed in all hitherto not strengthened windows. Men watch grimly behind. Pearse and his brother appear and survey the scene calmly within, though the latter looks a trifle

sad. Vessels are filled with water everywhere. Cooking is carried on where the G.P.O. staff left off.

"The great door leading into Princes Street is eventually covered with a rough barricade. A young officer dashes in cheering, a smile on his flushed features. Later he is hurried by, the lower part of his face severely injured with a bomb explosion, his hands, chin and neck streaming blood. He is ordered at the revolver's point—for he grows obstinate—when his wounds are dressed and shock subsides—to hospital. Blood is new to us and we only learn later that he has recovered.

NOTHING BUT KINDNESS

INSIDE organization proceeds. Parties come and go. The crowd outside cheers the hoisted Republican flags and the Proclamation. Pearse speaks without. Connolly, a grim, manly figure in green Commandant's uniform, grasps his hand: 'Thank God, Pearse, we have lived to see this day!' An orderly desolation has settled down within. A dazed D.M.P. man sits in the yard, flord, his head between his hands, but plucks up his courage to ask the rebels for beer, as he has five children and one wife. He doesn't get anything but kindness. Ambulances draw up outside and bear away wounded brought in. The Cumann na mBan girls soon, however, have set up a hospital on the ground floor in a former sorting-room.

"HENRY STREET corner and block opposite are gradually occupied by Volunteers. Gun shots and startling rumours of Ireland ablaze are as common as rosary beads round the necks of the watchers on the windows. Fires start opposite, are quenched, begin again and we grow used to the flames leaping up as we fall into brief spells of sleep or face the whizzing bullets whistling past and around us. Pop-pop-pop. Machine-guns are destroying Liberty Hall. Boom! Boom! Heavier guns.

“ We get used to them. But before that we have seen looting without, heard heavy firing in the sleepless nights, stood to arms to resist the long-expected general assault, seen Volunteers sally out on ‘ death and glory missions,’ or simply with revolvers and batons, to suppress the looters whom MacDermott has appealed to on several occasions. We have heard ‘ Go upstairs to meals ! ’ or ‘ Two men dying within ; be quiet ! ’ with equal equanimity. We have learned to reverence more the bravery and devotion of the women of our race. It is the fire which steals in, around and above us in the

night, which eventually drives us out. Sleep, hunger and thirst are dead sensations. At last the cordon of fire ceases to startle us. But the roof catches.

"We stand silent behind three rows of barricades. Joseph Plunkett's clear ringing voice and his clear, humorous eyes remain in our memory.

"We are in the midst of a darkened, leaping, roaring house of fire. We secure rations and dash out upon the street, swept with gunfire and lighted with flames. Some dash up alleys and seek refuge in houses as the snipers and machine-gun fire lights up the dark alleys.

"Men begin boring through houses. O'Rahilly out-distances his men and dies riddled within a few feet of a barricade. Connolly is carried in a sheet and under a Red Cross flag to safety. And Nelson's Pillar towers above the blazing G.P.O., his back to Parnell's outstretched hand, on the flames consuming the first gallant foot-prints of rough and courtly heroes on oft-trod long, winding, obstructed path to Ireland's freedom."

Let it stand without correction of its

repetitions and crudities for a first-hand record of the time. . . . I stood within it all, and a curious cloud fell over my mind and spirits, and a conflict sharpened in my mind. My old Socialist-pacifist hatred of war, my doubts about the jingoism and race-hatred of Sinn Fein, and then the spell of Pearse. A working-man spoke to me and voiced my thoughts. I knew him slightly, a pale-faced man who wrote simple verse in Larkin's paper and the mosquito Press of Sinn Fein.

He waved his shotgun towards Connolly and said: "Things are desperate when an anti-militarist like him leads us into this." Upstairs a woman echoed the conflict in my mind, for I could see a glory and a horror in all I saw, a deep respect in my heart for

all those doomed men and women behind the flames and exposed to the bullets.

Half the Dublin I knew seemed there. Sometimes a messenger came to tell us: "This is the only cheerful place in Dublin. In the city they think that you are all dead men. Black gloom down there." Upstairs this woman spoke, half to herself, half to a poet dangling a revolver: "Do you know that even if the British broke in I don't know whether it is right to take life? It's all right for the Volunteers. They can obey their orders."

On the worst night of all, when the fires glared in on the ground floor of the G.P.O., Pearse came and sat beside me. He was seated on a barrel, his slightly flushed face crowned by his turned-up military hat. He watched the flames leaping and curling fantastically in the

THEY WERE FIGHTING ON THE DUBLIN FRONT

On Wednesday, April 26, 1916, the third day of the Irish Rebellion, the insurgents, who occupied several strategic positions in Dublin, found themselves surrounded by a military cordon and their situation grew more desperate with each passing hour. In the streets barricades were erected, as shown here, from any material that came handy, and the normal life of the city was completely suspended while soldiers and rebels fought relentlessly with hand grenades, rifles and machine-guns.

LNA





WHEN DUBLIN HAD A WEEK OF WAR

The revolt of the Sinn Feiners in Dublin which started on Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, came to its inevitable end on the following Saturday when the insurgents surrendered unconditionally. This futile adventure resulted in more than 300 deaths, and hundreds of people were wounded, while damage to property was heavy. Above, Sackville Street as it appeared after the rebellion; right, British infantrymen stalking snipers at a bridge over the Grand Canal; below, Lancers stand by in College Green after carrying out a patrol.





Sport and General

THIS WAS DUBLIN'S G.P.O.

One of the numerous buildings which were occupied by the rebels in the ill-fated Dublin rising was the General Post Office in Sackville Street, and after a huge fire broke out in adjoining houses it spread to this stronghold, to add to the desperate plight of the besieged men. Here is shown the gutted building as it appeared when the rebellion was quelled and the fire had been quenched.

stillness, broken periodically by rifle volleys. Around him men slept on the floor, Connolly amongst them. Others were on guard behind loop-holed sand-bags. We talked casually for some time. "Bullets frightened us all," said Pearse; "only liars were not afraid of bullets. We might all come through, perhaps—perhaps not." I shrugged my shoulders.

I was past feeling, and told Pearse I had only one reason for wishing to survive, that I might write a book. He smiled and we sat silent, for in that great agony how futile seemed all ink and pen and words. The volleys rolled away, and Pearse watched the flames. "All the boys were safe," he said, with a sigh of relief. Then he suddenly

turned and asked me, casually but with a certain abruptness: "It was the right thing to do, wasn't it?" "Yes. Failure means the end of everything, the Volunteers, Ireland, all!" And the tone showed the agony of his mind, but an agony flaming to final conviction.

Outside the flames grew brighter and there was a terrific burst of gunfire away in the darkness. Pearse paused and continued with deep enthusiasm and passionate conviction in his words: "Well, when we are all wiped out, people will blame us for everything, condemn us, only but for this protest

the war would have ended and nothing would have been done. After a few years, they will see the meaning of what we tried to do."

Then the conversation turned on the heroism of the insurgents: "What a man," said Pearse, "what a great man is O'Rahilly, coming in here to us although he is against the Rising! . . . Emmet's two-hour insurrection is nothing to this! . . . They will talk of Dublin in future as one of the splendid cities like they speak today of Paris! Dublin's name will be glorious for ever!" . . .

I SAW FIELDS of DEATH at KEMMEL

by Lt.-Col. R. G. A. Hamilton, Master of Belhaven

DURING the latter part of April 1916 the threat of gas when the wind was favourable to the Germans was always imminent. No great battle took place at this time, but Lt.-Col. R. G. A. Hamilton's diary reveals the constant anxiety felt by a senior officer of the R.A. lest some major attack under cover of gas might be made on the infantry. Col. Hamilton was stationed near the village of Kemmel and describes the heartrending effect of gas clouds on the civilian population and the wretched dumb animals of the fields

Kemmel, April 28, 1916.

ANOTHER night of alarms and excitements. The Staff seems to have quite made up their minds that a gas attack is imminent on our front. At 10 o'clock the brigade major of the 72nd Infantry Brigade rang me up and asked me to open fire on the German trenches on the left of our zone. He expected the Germans to attack about 2 a.m., and wanted me to start enfilading them at 1.30. As the trenches are so very close at this point, I was not very

taken with the idea and rang up General Philpotts to ask him what he thought about it. He was not at all in favour of shooting so very close in the dark, so I decided to compromise and told Cammel, who commands B Battery, to fire

occasional salvos at the German second-line trenches, which are some fifty yards in rear of their front line. I hear that the infantry are very pleased with the result. I got very little sleep, as the telephone rang every five minutes.

THIS morning the 60-pounder battery in front of us came in for a very bad time. The German shooting was wonderfully accurate, but they had not quite got the range correct. In spite of the fact that the majority of the shells were falling within a few yards of the guns, I don't think any damage was done. My farm is only about 400 yards from this battery, and quantities of pieces fell all around us. They come quite hard enough to do a lot of harm if they hit one.

Kemmel, April 29, 1916.

Again, last night, we expected a gas attack, which did not eventuate. I must say I wish they would make it and

SIXTY-POUNDER PLAYS CRESCENDO

With the supply of guns and shells increased, British artillery action in 1916 became more and more intensive in France. This photograph, taken in 1916 at a 60-pounder battery, shows a gun at the moment of discharge when its long barrel retracted on the recoil. Over the gun, foliage has been arranged, a crude form of camouflage devised to conceal the gun from the eyes of hostile airmen.

Topical





THUS ARMED AND CLAD THEY FOUGHT IN 1916

These three infantrymen are going out in the spring of 1916 from their spell in the trenches to a rest camp. It is interesting to contrast this photograph with that in page 238 and to note the changes that less than two years of war had made in the whole appearance of the fighting soldier. Tin hats had taken the place of cloth caps, and the smartness of uniforms had been to a great extent sacrificed to efficiency and comfort. The man on the left is sporting a captured German Imperial Eagle badge on the front of his helmet.



WHEN THE 'FIGHTING FIFTH' WERE THE SMILING FIFTH

This unique photograph (a portion of which appeared in "World War") is here reproduced because it shows, as no other war photograph does so effectively, a British regiment after a successful advance. These are men of the Northumberland Fusiliers, the famous "Fighting Fifth," seen also in page 582. It was in the Peninsular War that the regiment by its gallantry earned that sobriquet and also the less well-known one of the "Old and Bold," which was justified by its great record in many wars and by the fact that its history dates from 1674.



WITH THEIR TROPHIES TAKEN AT ST. ELOI

After the action at St. Eloi on March 27, 1916, in which they reached their objective with hardly a casualty, the Fighting Fifth are proudly showing their trophies, including German machine-guns and several types of helmet. During the World War the Northumberland Fusiliers fought in nearly every battle area, and the Regular, Service and Territorial battalions of the regiment numbered over fifty. The two battalions known as the Tyneside Scottish and Tyneside Irish were prominent in the battle of the Somme.



NOT QUITE REGULATION HEAD-GEAR

This scene is behind the lines at Poperinghe on June 14, 1916. Canadian soldiers are at a field kitchen receiving the ever-welcome issue of tea. They have recently been in a "scrap," and some of them are wearing German caps; while one man, valuing his trophy more than his comfort, still keeps on the enemy tin hat that he has picked up in the trenches. At this time the German army was not fully equipped with steel helmets.

Imperial War Museum

get it over. The 3rd Division have come in on our left, and relieved the Territorial Division, which is a great blessing. If they had any chance of penetrating our lines before, I don't think they have now.

We have been issued with a new type of anti-gas helmet. It consists of a metal box, which is carried in a haversack and contains chemicals. There is a face-pad that goes over the mouth, with a clip that closes the nose. A thick white tube connects the chemical box and mouth-piece. The goggles are separate. I don't like the thing, and shall trust to the old-fashioned flannel bag that goes right over the head.

We found that the local inhabitants had only got four helmets between eight people, so we had to give them some old spare ones that we had. In spite of alarming messages that strong German reinforcements had been seen coming up behind Messines, nothing happened. However, I still believe they will attack within the next few days. They seem to have made a big attack on the First Army between Hulluch and Loos. This morning I went round the batteries with General Philpotts, who asked the unfortunate gunners fearful conundrums about the various fuses and explosives we use; the poor men had no idea what the shells were made of!

I had quite a near squeak myself, riding up there. Two 5.9 shrapnel burst close to the road, not more than 80 yards on my right. I have just heard that I have got to lecture to young officers at the Divisional Technical School on the 1st of May, on the subject of Artillery in Trench Warfare. It ought not to be very difficult. Radmore goes on leave to-night, 11 p.m. Another deserter has just come into our lines, and says that the Huns are going to assault with gas at 1 a.m. tonight. I am inclined to believe it is true this time, the more so as the wind is just right for them—less than ten miles an hour and blowing straight from their trenches to ours. I have sent round a special warning to the batteries to be ready.

Kemmel, April 30, 1916.

THE gas attack has come off at last, and was very serious whilst it lasted. By midnight last night I had completed all arrangements and had drawn up code words for each battery, indicating what places they might have to attack according to how the German assault developed. At 1 a.m. I had just lain down in the hope of getting an hour's sleep when the gas alarm siren on Kemmel Hill started. Immediately afterwards the infantry brigade rang



SILENT DISCHARGE OF DEATH

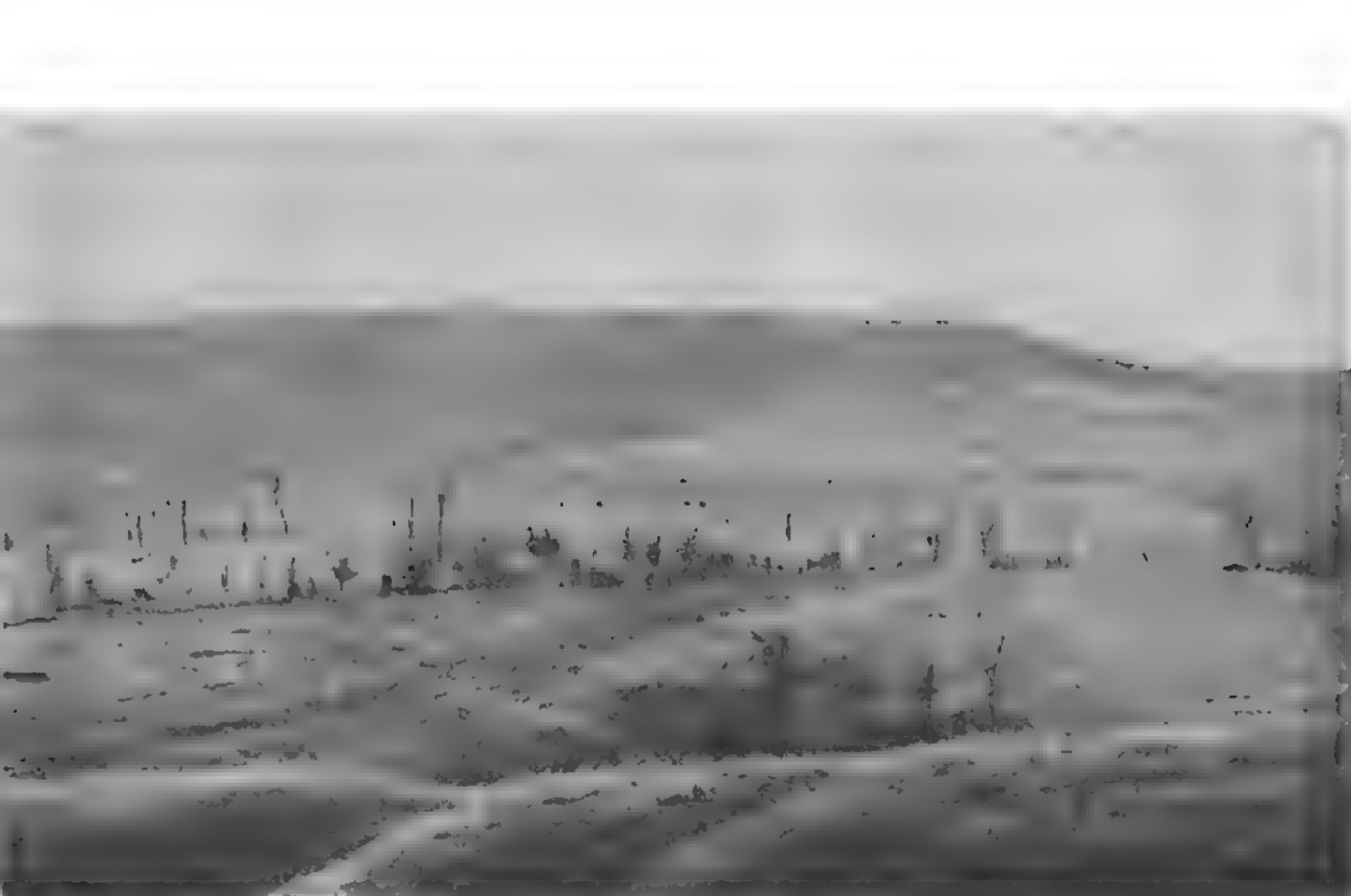
Here is the apparatus by which the Germans sent clouds of poison gas across No Man's Land. The gas was contained in cylinders, which, in case they might be hit by flying splinters of shrapnel from enemy guns, were surrounded by sandbags. The gas was carried by a number of tubes over the parapet and discharged through nozzles well away from the trench. A steady breeze in the right direction was necessary for a gas attack to be made.

Imperial War Museum

up and said, "Gas attack on D 4," that is one section of trenches that we cover. I gave the alarm to the head-quarter men and the Belgian inhabitants of the farm. In the meantime, terrific rifle and machine-gun fire started from the trenches, followed a few seconds after by all the field guns on the front. I laced up my boots as quick as possible and lit the lamp.

The night was very dark, and it was very difficult to get about with the goggles over one's eyes. I had not expected to be shelled here, as the Germans have never sent anything near here whilst we have been here. However, within two minutes of the alarm being given, there was a terrific crash as a shell burst just outside the house. From that moment the shells





TIME HAS HEALED THE SCARS ON THESE 'FIELDS OF DEATH'

The devastation and destruction wrought by the fierce fighting at Mount Kemmel described by the Master of Belhaven in this chapter is well seen in the panoramic photograph above. Here, where civilians and animals were struck down in their fields by gas, only a few tree stumps remain to show that this was once a pleasant stretch of country. But time did its work, and in the left page the battlefield is seen as it is today once more under cultivation, the hill surmounted by a church. The figure on the road is a former British officer, now in business in the neighbourhood.

Panorama, Imperial War Museum; lower photo, courtesy of The Daily Telegraph

came all round this farm at intervals of half a minute. They started with a field-gun, firing shrapnel, but a 5.9 howitzer soon joined in. Considering that they had never registered they made wonderful shooting, shell after shell bursting within a few yards of the farm buildings. We had never expected to be shelled so far back as this, and consequently had not prepared any dug-outs. Our telephone switch-board was in a barn with thin mud walls and it was most alarming having all these shells bursting just outside.

There was a terrible scene with the local inhabitants, who had hysterics, and got in our way. They had not got enough masks to go round, and had refused to send away their children as I had frequently warned them for the last two days. It was not till the gas-cloud was just on us that they could be persuaded to fly to Dranoutre. The gas being very heavy travels along valleys, so I told them to keep along the ridge. Apparently they were not caught, as they had mostly turned up again this morning.

I was only just in time. Suddenly the cattle and dogs set up a piteous noise and we smelt the chlorine gas. Helmets were put on immediately, but not before I could feel the irritation in my throat.

With our helmets on, we could not taste the chlorine, and in the darkness it could not be seen; but we knew it was on us by the way the howls of the dogs and the bellowing of the cattle ceased.

THE noise of our guns was like the roll of a drum, and the sky was lit up with the flashes. Every gun on the Corps Front must have joined in, from the 12-in. down to the field guns. We were firing high explosive almost entirely, in order to break up the gas-cloud. I found the greatest difficulty in breathing with a gas helmet on, and speaking through the telephone was most tiring.

About 1.30 I got a message by a dispatch rider that the trench D 4 and our salient at that point had been captured by the Germans, who had thus secured a footing in our trenches. The brigadier requested me to barrage the

German trench opposite this place, in order to prevent reinforcements from reaching the assaulting party. The message also said that the 1st North Staffords were about to launch a counter-attack. Shortly afterwards we heard that the Huns had been bombed out and that our line was re-established all along.

THE way in which the Germans got into our trenches is rather interesting, as it is the first time I have heard of this method being used, except by poachers. The gas-cloud was accompanied by dense volumes of black smoke. Under cover of this the Germans came out of their trenches, crossed No Man's Land, which at this place is only 30 yards wide, and stood on the top of our parapet. They worked in pairs, one man holding a very powerful electric torch, the other having his rifle ready. As they stood on our parapet, the man with the lamp flashed it on to one of our men in the trench beneath him, so blinding him for the moment. The other man then shot him at point-blank range. This ruse was so successful that all our men in that part of the trench were almost immediately shot down and the Germans jumped down into the trench. They found a mine shaft there, which they tried to destroy by lowering a charge of dynamite with a fuse attached, but as there was a lot of water

at the foot of the shaft, the fuse went off without setting off the dynamite.

To return to my own adventures: About 2 o'clock I heard from the brigadier that he was on his way to his battle headquarters, which are strong bomb-proofs about three-quarters of a mile behind the trenches. I therefore started off with Dew, the Orderly Officer, to join him there. It was just beginning to get light, and we could see what an enormous number of shells the Germans had used to barrage the valley and so stop us from bringing up reinforcements. There were quantities of holes all round our farm, and this, of course, did not include all the shrapnel which had burst in the air. After walking a mile across country we reached battle H.Q., where I reported to General Mitford, commanding the 72nd Infantry Brigade, curiously enough the same general that I supported in the attack at Loos last September.

Things were pretty quiet by that time, and it was quite light. The Staff expected another attack about 5 a.m., so we all waited with patience to see what would happen. Reinforcements were on their way from all parts, and cyclists were being sent off to meet and guide the various battalions that were now coming to our help.

HE FOUGHT IN PYJAMAS AND SLIPPERS

I LEFT Dew to represent me for a short time and went over to see how D/108 were getting on. I found Birch in great spirits, having had only three casualties, all gassed. He was really the funniest sight I have ever seen. I am sure he has set up a record for battery commanders. He actually fought a battle in his pyjamas! His get-up was positively the limit: a cap, cloak, his pyjamas showing underneath his cloak, and bedroom slippers! When the alarm went he had only just time to put on his gas-helmet and run out to his guns.

Some very gallant things were done today. A sentry in the front line, on first smelling the gas, gave the alarm to the other men by striking his gong before putting on his gas-helmet. The result was that he fell dead the moment the gas-cloud reached him. Also two of our telephonists, when the wire to their F.O.O. had been out in many places, took a message through to him in the trenches and brought back the answer, passing through a hail of fire each time.

I also went over to C Battery to have a look at them and tell them that all the batteries in the brigade had done very well. Our casualties were very light; one officer slightly wounded and four men gassed, through not putting on their helmets quickly enough. I

believe the battalion in front of us had about sixty casualties only. I stayed, talking to General Mitford till 8 a.m., when he decided to go home, as it was too late for another attack.

I walked back to my farm and had breakfast and shaved. The Infantry Brigade had no further news, so I came back to my headquarters. After lunch I tried to get a little sleep, but had to give it up, owing to the telephone ringing all the time. I have had temporary wires laid into our own Battle H.Q., which is alongside the infantry ones, so that if there is another attack we shall be in communication with all the batteries from there. This morning I had to depend on orderlies. The day has been very quiet, hardly a shot fired. We have had about 500 casualties, I think, in our division. The gas cases were dreadful to see; most of them will die.

Kemmel, May 1, 1916.

ANOTHER night of alarms and excitement. At 10 p.m. I had just lain down in the hope of getting a little rest, after being on my feet for forty-one hours on end. Suddenly a telephonist rushed into the room and said, "Gas attack; the siren is going." Almost before he had finished speaking the guns were all going for all they were worth. At the same time, the infantry sent up the S.O.S. rockets, which meant an attack by the German infantry. The guns were firing "gun-fire" at about fifteen rounds per minute. I put my boots on as quickly as possible and blew my whistle to rouse everyone. In about five minutes the 72nd Infantry Brigade wired through to say that the attack was not on our front, but on a brigade a little way off on our left. Accordingly, I at once ordered all the batteries to cease firing till further orders. General Philpotts then told me on the "phone" to "stand to" and await developments.

PRESENTLY I heard that the Huns were letting off smoke in front of our trenches, but not gas. I therefore ordered a slow rate of barrage fire to be kept up, to interrupt them in case they were massing for an attack again. It all fizzled out in little more than an hour, and by midnight all was clear, except for a good deal of rifle-fire and a very large number of Verey lights that were being sent up by both sides. The colonel returned from leave some time during the night and was much surprised to hear of the battle we had had. After breakfast I returned to C Battery. It really is an extraordinary coincidence that each time the 108th Brigade is in a battle I seem to be in command.

It was most interesting seeing the effect of the gas-cloud on the crops. It must have travelled in a straight line, as one could follow its path quite easily. We seem to have been just on the edge of it. There were large fields of clover that might have been divided in half with a ruler, one half bright green and the other a chocolate brown. I got off and picked a bunch of the burnt stuff as a curio.

The gas they used this time was phosgene and is deadly poisonous. Cattle were killed several miles behind the line.

I got back to the battery just in time for dinner to find that everything had been quite quiet while I had been away. About midnight the infantry rang up to say that they were having a very bad time in my zone from the German machine-guns. Both sides were out in front of their trenches repairing their wires that had been cut in the assault. The German and English working parties must have been within a few yards of each other, as the trenches were only thirty yards apart at that place. They implored me to fire a few salvos to try to stop the Hun machine-guns. I fired about three rounds of gun fire with high explosive, after which the infantry said that the machine-guns ceased troubling them and that terrible screams and groans could be heard, so there is no doubt we must have hit someone.

They say that the men who assaulted our trenches were picked men of the Prussian Guard. Apparently, there was great difficulty in distinguishing Germans from English during the hand-to-hand fighting in the trenches, as both sides were wearing gas-helmets and it was a very dark night, added to which the Germans had mixed black smoke with the gas. Altogether, it must have been very unpleasant in the trenches at the time, as both sides were throwing bombs freely. The Germans not only managed to take away their own dead and wounded with them, but ours as well.

Kemmel, May 2, 1916.

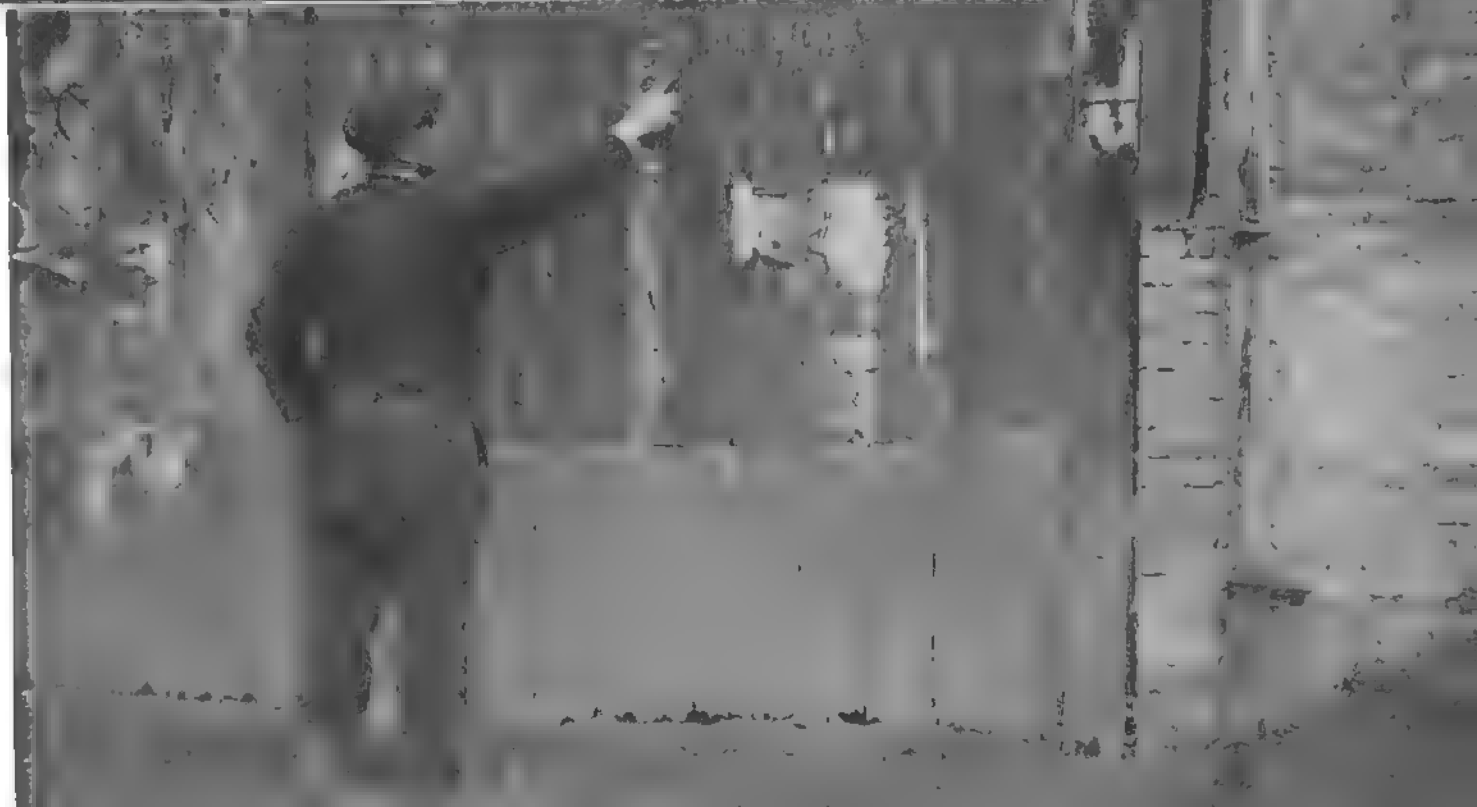
This afternoon I went up to the top of Kemmel Hill to try to register some new points, but it was so misty that it was impossible to see anything at all. I fired a salvo of H.E. into a house near Messines that produced an enormous volume of smoke. It hung about in a great black cloud and then drifted away. It is the second time this happened when I have hit that house. I cannot help thinking that it must be used as a bomb store, or perhaps the Hun has smoke cylinders in it.



BILLETS AND BATHS THEN AND NOW

In many a village of France and Flanders there are still to be seen small reminders of the World War, no less provocative of moving memories than carefully preserved trenches and dug-outs. Two are shown in this page, both in the village of Naours, north of Amiens. Left is the gate to a farm that was once a British billet, with the indication that it accommodated 33 men clearly legible more than twenty years after. Below is a door on which "Bath House" was written in war-time, but which now carries an advertisement of summer fashions. Above is a soldier taking a "dip" in the brick tank of a farm, a luxurious bath for war-time

Photos, A. J. Insall, copyright A.P. Id., and L.N.A.



I WAS in The HAMPSHIRE

A Stoker's Story of Kitchener's Death

by W. C. Farnden



ONE OF THE LUCKY TWELVE

Mr. W. C. Farnden is seen above as he was when serving as a stoker on board H.M.S. Hampshire. His escape was the more fortunate because in such a disaster the black squad are in the most dangerous position of all.

Spor & General

A WHISTLE blew, a flag waved, and a train slid importantly out of King's Cross Station on the evening of June 4, 1916.

Seated in one of the four saloon coaches of the train—a special—was a khaki-clad figure, moustached and red-tabbed. It was Lord Kitchener.

With him were his secretary and personal friend, Lieut.-Colonel O. A. Fitzgerald, General Ellershaw, Mr. O'Beirne, of the Foreign Office, Sir H. F. Donaldson, and Mr. L. S. Robertson, of the Ministry of Munitions, and 2nd Lieutenant McPherson.

In another coach were a clerk, a detective, and three servants.

The party was on the first stage of its journey to Petrograd at the invitation of the Russian Emperor, who at this critical stage of the war urgently wished to confer with our Secretary of State for War.

As it sped along at sixty miles an hour on its 700 miles journey to Thurso, from where the sea voyage to Archangel—the only port of Russia in Europe open to our ships—was to begin, rain swept in great gusts against the windows of the coach and the wind howled in a manner which foreboded a stormy passage for the mission.

At Thurso Admiralty instructions had been given for a destroyer to be in readiness to carry the distinguished party across the Pentland Firth to Scapa Flow, where H.M.S. Hampshire was waiting to complete the journey.

The Hampshire was one of the fastest armoured cruisers of the British Navy

and, with the rest of the Grand Fleet which had returned only three days before from Jutland, was lying at anchor in the famous naval base.

With the exception of the captain, we aboard the Hampshire had no knowledge of the nature of the "special mission" that Admiralty orders of the previous day had informed us that the Hampshire was to undertake.

Neither the officers nor the men had any idea of the identity of the "distinguished person" who, it was rumoured, was to be a passenger. So it was with eagerness that the 800 strong crew on that afternoon of June 5 awaited the coming of the pinnacle from the Iron Duke, the Admiral of the Fleet's flagship, aboard which the "distinguished person" had lunched with Admiral Sir John Jellicoe.

Presently it was seen racing across the turbulent waters, and a thrill ran through the company as it recognized the tall military figure seated in the stern as that of Lord Kitchener, the personality known to every man, woman and child in the British Empire.

A GALE was blowing from the north-east and tremendous seas were running as, greeted by Captain Saville, the Hampshire's captain, Lord Kitchener came up the gangway. But this did not deter the great soldier from carrying out his duty.

There was one slight change in the original plans, which had been for the Hampshire to take the route to Archangel passing up the eastern side of the Orkneys, following the channel which was regularly kept reasonably safe by minesweepers.

Instead, as the result of a suggestion by Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, in view of the heavy weather, a last-minute decision to make use of the more sheltered route on the western side was made, although this would probably take slightly longer.

Accordingly we weighed anchor and

steamed towards Hoy Sound, the western exit from Scapa. Lord Kitchener and his staff retired to the captain's cabin.

Soon we were rounding Stromness, and it was then that the Hampshire met the full force of the raging storm. Wind and rain were lashing the sea into a fury and all hatches excepting one had to be battened down.

Two destroyers, Unity and Victor, following in our wake as escorts, were ordered back by the Hampshire's Captain because of the heavy seas. We had perhaps been going for an hour



STILL TAKING RISKS

Twenty-two years after the events he describes in this chapter Mr. Farnden is still leading a life with plenty of hazards, for shunters and platelayers are the railway workers who run the heaviest risks of all. He is here seen on duty at Bognor Regis.

Norman Wymer



THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH OF KITCHENER

and a half, keeping as close to the rocky coast as was safe, when above the roar of the storm there sounded a deeper, more reverberating roar—the roar of an explosion. Soon afterwards the Hampshire listed alarmingly to starboard and began to sink.

Orders "Abandon ship" were given, and as the hatches were opened men poured up from below on to the deck and took up their positions at the boat stations. I was among them.

There was no panic, but a great deal of confusion; shouted orders were lost in the howling wind and the booming seas. It was found impossible to launch the boats; the derricks were electrically controlled and the current had failed.

One boat which was got away by cutting its lashings was immediately caught by a tremendous wave and dashed to pieces against the Hampshire's side. Between fifty and sixty men were flung into the water.

Men now began jumping overboard from the quarter-deck in their lifebelts

Before Lord Kitchener joined the ill-fated Hampshire in stormy Scapa Flow, on June 5, 1916, he lunched with Admiral Sir John Jellicoe in the Iron Duke. In this historic photograph the great soldier is seen disembarking from the destroyer Oak which took him to the Iron Duke. A few hours later the Hampshire, shattered by a floating mine, lay at the bottom of the sea, and "K. of K." was dead.

and life-saving waistcoats. All around the fast-sinking vessel men could be seen clutching pieces of wreckage in frantic efforts to save themselves. Some were badly injured or scalded, for a boiler had been burst by the force of the explosion.

Now it was that resort was made to the Carley safety floats, which hold between fifty and sixty men.

They resemble huge oval lifebelts. Their edges are filled with cork. They keep afloat in the heaviest seas. Round their edges are rope handles which enable distressed seamen to hold on. To these floats is fitted an iron grating on which one stands waist deep in water. I helped to get Nos. 1 and 2 floats away, and then took up my position on No. 3.

A few minutes later, as those of us who had managed to scramble on to No. 3 float were paddling frantically to get out of the way of the Hampshire, she gave a fearful kind of lurch and began to go down by the bows.

It was a sight I shall never forget.

Many of the crew, when it had been found impossible to lower the boats, had remained in them as they hung from their davits, thinking that as the ship went down under them the boats would float.

Instead, when the Hampshire gave a final plunge and, turning a somersault forwards, disappeared, she carried down with her all the boats and those in them. As the water closed over her we realized that although we had, at least,



ORKNEY REMEMBERS KITCHENER

Upon rugged Marwick Head, Orkney, there stands this tower which was erected by the Islanders in memory of Earl Kitchener. The memorial is 48 feet high and overlooks the spot near the Brough of Birsay where the cruiser, the Hampshire, sank on June 5, 1916, bringing death to the great Field-Marshal and all except twelve men who were aboard.

The plaque on the tower was unveiled by Lord Horne, who is seen in the photograph on the right, on July 2, 1926. While the ceremony was being performed the battleship, the Royal Sovereign, steamed over the exact spot where the Hampshire lies, and fired a salute.

Central Press



escaped that awful death, the float on which we were being flung hither and thither seemed likely at any moment to be smashed by the terrific seas.

There were between thirty and forty men on the circular raft when the ship went down, but one by one they disappeared.

The water was icy cold and many died from sheer exhaustion from exposure; others were washed away.

All around us were floating bodies. Other men were clinging to lifebelts and pieces of wreckage and calling for help. But it was impossible to rescue them.

In the distance we could see the rocky Orkney coast, a black and jagged ridge against the sky.

An hour passed, two hours, and nearer and nearer to land the storm hurled us. Men were still dying in the agony of it all until there were but four of us left alive.

Presently our raft was flung against the shore, and smashed, leaving us clinging to the rocks.

Between me and the shore was a strip of calmer water, perhaps twelve feet wide, perhaps more. And I could not swim. But I somehow managed to get across it. I was saved.

How I succeeded in climbing the face of that craggy shore, with the sound of the storm beating below I shall never know. But I eventually clawed my way to the top, bruised and bleeding.

I remember little more, excepting the final effort to crawl towards a house that I could see 300 yards inland, and being met by kindly folk and given food and hot drinks and shelter.

My companions, too, reached the top, and after a few days' convalescence we were sent back to a hospital ship in Scapa Flow.

In all there were only twelve survivors out of the entire crew. Besides Lord Kitchener and his staff, all officers of the Hampshire perished.

That there was a deliberate plot to do away with Lord Kitchener has often been rumoured. It has been said that the Germans were aware of the projected voyage and sent the Hampshire to the bottom, either with a torpedo fired from a submarine or by a mine purposely laid in its course.

In any case, the torpedo theory can at once be discounted, for no submarine

could possibly have lived in such seas. And the deliberate mine theory, in my opinion, is untenable since no one, not even Lord Kitchener or the Hampshire's captain, knew until the last minute that the ship would take the western instead of the eastern route.

Moreover, subsequent sweeping in the vicinity where the Hampshire went down accounted for twelve of the thirteen mines known to have been laid by the submarine U.175 as a preliminary to the enemy's action at Jutland. The thirteenth sank the Hampshire.



TWO OF THE TWELVE SURVIVORS—OUT OF 800

Within a week of the battle of Jutland, in which she took part as "linking ship" between Admiral Jellicoe's flagship, the Iron Duke, and his light cruiser screen, the Hampshire (seen below) went down with all hands but twelve, as described by Stoker Farnden in this chapter. She was a cruiser of the Devonshire class, of 10,850 tons, with a speed of 22.5 knots. Above are two of the survivors arriving home in 1916. They are Petty Officer W. Wesson and Leading Seaman W. Cashman. The latter is at the wheel of the car.

Photos, Grubb and Imperial War Museum



**THREE V.C.s OF THE YPRES
LEAGUE THEN AND NOW**



LANCE-SERGEANT BELCHER

Lance-Sergeant Douglas W. Belcher, 5th London Regiment, who later became a captain in the Indian Army, won his V.C. on May 13, 1915, near St. Julien, when, with a handful of men, he held a position against German attacks and practically prevented the enemy breaking through on the Wietje Road.



SERGEANT BOULTER

In the list of V.C.'s dated October 26, 1916, was the name of Sergeant W. E. Boulter. While serving in the Northamptonshire Regiment at Trônes Wood on July 14, 1916, he bombed a machine-gun team out of a position where it was causing heavy casualties. He later became a lieutenant.



LANCE-CORPORAL WILCOX

The V.C. was awarded to Lance-Corporal A. Wilcox, 2/4th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, for his gallant conduct at Laventie on September 12, 1918. Some enemy machine-guns were holding up an advance. He went forward alone and captured four guns.

All three of these gallant soldiers survived the war, and they are here seen together at the Ypres Memorial Service held in London on the Horse Guards Parade on October 30, 1938. Left to right are Captain Belcher, Lieutenant Boulter, and Mr. Wilcox. All three served in the Salient and were thus qualified for membership of the League, but only Captain Belcher won his V.C. at Ypres. The two last-named are carrying the tribute from the Ypres League which was afterwards placed on the Cenotaph.



WHEN the PRINCESS PAT'S FOUGHT BACK to BACK

'Eye Witness' Story of German Tornado Attack on Mount Sorrel by Lord Beaverbrook

LORD BEAVERBROOK, who, as Sir Max Aitken, was the official "eye witness" of the Canadian forces, has already, in Chapter 68, described earlier incidents of their gallantry in the field. The most serious battle which took place in 1916 before the Somme offensive was the major attack launched on the Canadian lines at Mount Sorrel on June 2, 1916. The actions lasted for twelve days, of which Lord Beaverbrook here describes the first two. A gallant divisional commander of the Canadian E.F., Major-General Mercer, was killed in this battle

CASTING his eye along the ridge from Hooze, the observer sees across a mile or so of green water-meadows striped with the dark lines of high, luxuriant hedges, the northern part covered only by a few isolated and shattered trees, until he comes to Zouave Wood, which runs up into the first and greatest of the gaps.

This gap isolates Hooze from the system, and through it the Germans could see right down on to the British trenches in the plain. Farther south the nearer slopes are covered with the great expanse of Sanctuary Wood, once so thick as to be almost impenetrable to the Guards in October 1914, but now sadly thinned by gun-fire and crowned by the slight eminences known as Hills 62 and 61. Beyond these comes Mount Sorrel, and the sector of the action is complete; for here the British line breaks suddenly back to the west and to the railway. But between Sanctuary Wood and Mount Sorrel there is a curious feature—Observatory Ridge—a long tongue of higher ground, bare and barren, runs right back due west into the British positions towards Zillebeke village and lake.

JUNE 1, 1916. Such was the position occupied by the Third Canadian Division on June 1, 1916, as seen from the rear—a pleasant prospect if it were not for the signs of devastation—the white-scarred, headless trees, the upcast earth and the growl of the guns which in the salient seem to come from every point on the horizon. Viewed by the Germans from the east, it did not look quite so strong, for they, too, held high ground dominating slightly in many places the line held by the Canadians. . . .

The Germans were directing their efforts against a strong position and

sound trenches, yet they swept both out of existence as the autumn wheat is mowed down by the reaper. It was not merely a line they destroyed, but a whole area.

June 2, 8.30 a.m.—1.15 p.m. Indeed, the storm which burst on the 3rd Division at 8.30 that June morning was like a tropical tornado which presses men flat to the ground and suffocates them with the mere force of the wind, which uproots forests and hurls them headlong, obliterates all ancient landmarks and the houses and shelters of men and beasts, and leaves behind nothing but a tangled desolation from which a few survivors creep out scarcely sane enough to realize the catastrophe or to repair the damage.

LITTER OF HUMAN REMAINS

BUT here the blinding crashes overhead were not those of thunder and lightning, but of high explosive.

The fragments which drove through the air were not bits of wood or masses of vegetation. They were steel and iron fragments which pierced the flesh, as the shock of the explosion stopped the heart and threw cascades of earth over bodies in which life still beat feebly, or in which it was already extinct.

THE solid trenches melted away, and mounds and craters appeared where none existed before. A litter of broken wood, burst sandbags and human remains cumbered the earth where it was not merciful enough to bury them. And this tornado of man was let loose on a few acres which contained, perhaps, two or three thousand troops, and continued for the space of about four hours.

1.15 p.m. The German assault was

delivered just after one o'clock, when their guns lifted from the front trenches and was preluded by the blowing up of mines, which were, however, outside our trenches and had no effect on the ultimate issue.

The attack was launched from the south-west, for it was plainly visible to our men in the trenches by Hill 60. The watchers saw in the clear air four successive lines of grey-clad figures carrying packs and greatcoats advancing in the distance with the assurance of those who neither dread nor expect resistance; behind came the engineers with the material to make good the position. An indignant rapping from the machine-guns on Hill 60 greeted them, but the tide flowed on, unheeding. The lines reached Mount Sorrel and disappeared. The enemy, by attacking the corner of the line, advanced in effect "en échelon"; that is to say, their left flank reached Mount Sorrel and cleared it somewhat before their centre attacked the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles.

THEY WERE ATTACKED ALL ROUND

THE result was that Colonel Shaw, in his redoubt, found his right flank exposed and was the object of a concentric attack. None the less, the garrison put up a heroic fight against machine-guns, rifle fire and grenades. . . . This dogged defence was of the utmost value, for the second line at this point was desperately weak and quite unable to resist a resolute assault. Of the support company and battalion headquarters about seventy-one men survived. The total casualties of the regiment were 367. It was now the turn of the Princess Patricia's to withstand the assault, which came upon them at about 1.30 p.m.

1.30 p.m. The Princess Patricia's had two companies in the firing line, one in the communication trench leading up to it past battalion H.Q., with a tail in the support line, and a fourth entirely in the support line trenches. The right-hand company in the firing line was, like the Canadian Mounted Rifle regiments, blown out of its trenches, and the survivors took ground in communication trenches held by the support company. At 1.30 p.m. the German wave lapped round the left of all except the front-line company commanded by Captain Niven, which turned about and volleyed into the Germans' right rear.

This company kept its position in the front line, and maintained it for eighteen hours after the bombardment began, although the enemy attempted



FROM THIS HILL SHELLS RAINED ON HAPLESS YPRES

The German position on Hill 60 was a terrible menace to Ypres and to the whole salient. This photograph, taken from Hill 60 in 1938, shows what an admirable vantage point the Germans had for observation of the British movements and for shelling the British positions. Hill 60 is two and a half miles south-east of Ypres, which can be seen in the distance with its reconstructed buildings shining in the summer sun.

Photo, W. A. Davis, copyright A.P. Ltd.



WHAT MEMORIES THEY RECALL !

Twenty-two years after the events related in this chapter considerable lengths of trenches, besides tunnels and dug-outs, are still preserved on Hill 60, recalling that terrific struggle during which deeds of almost incredible heroism were performed. A British ex-officer is gazing contemplatively at this reminder of the realities of war within a stone's throw of where another harvest than that of death is being gathered.

Photos, W. A. Davis, copyright A.P. Ltd.



GRIM MEMENTOES OF WAR

On Hill 60 today there are relics of war time, minenwerfer and a suit of bomber's armour. Such armour was issued to a number of bombers, but it was quickly discarded, as it was too heavy and seriously impeded their movements.

to penetrate the gap on the left and had seized the dip to the right of the trenches on the rise which they held. Captain Niven had with one hand to fend off attempts to bomb his men at right and left down the trench, and with the other to turn and enfilade with excellent result the Germans who were pressing in on either flank. Yet he, who was in command, is chiefly anxious to explain in his report that this was the result of a pure accident, as the enemy had over-ranged his trench and the heavies and trench mortars were bursting twenty yards behind, save for the right platoon, which mustered only three survivors.

The enemy then attacked the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry companies in the communication trenches and began to bomb his way to the

HERE HEROES FOUGHT AND FELL:

HILL 60 TODAY AND YESTERDAY

Hill 60, vital summit in the line, became a shambles where thousands perished in the intensive fighting in 1915 and later years of the War. The photograph at the bottom of the page was taken on the hill in 1920, the whole scene, with the pathetic wooden cross, debris and seared earth, being one of utter desolation. Today most of the scars are hidden on the hill and it has become a place of pilgrimage, crowned by the Queen Victoria's Rifles memorial (left), and with its dug-outs, tunnels and trenches maintained in their original condition for the sightseer and souvenirs for collectors, as shown immediately below.

Photos, Captain B. Warne; A. J. Inceall, copyright A.P. Ltd.; and Antony of Ypres





CANADIAN COLD STEEL READY FOR 'JERRY'

This front line trench is manned by Canadians, who are here seen standing to and fixing bayonets ready for any emergency. In hand-to-hand fighting the troops of the Dominion showed remarkable bravery, as Lord Beaverbrook shows in this chapter. They were equally steadfast in defence.

Canadian Records

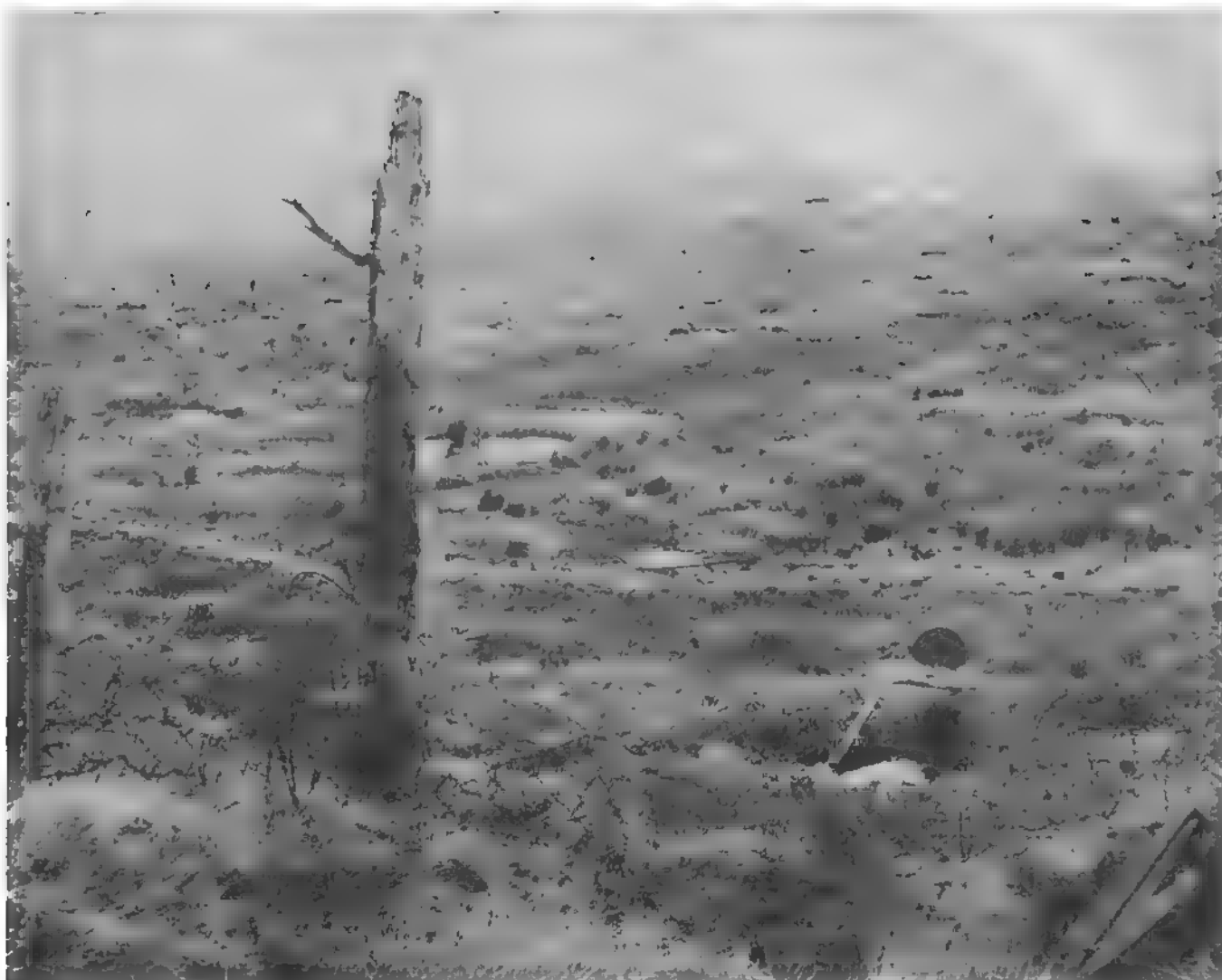
support line and the Apex line, which possessed at that time scarcely any defenders. Colonel Buller rallied the support platoons in the communication trench and pushed them up to a counter-attack to save the support line. Not satisfied with the rate of their progress through the shattered trench, he climbed outside to urge them on, and was killed instantly. . . .

June 2, 2 p.m. There followed a dark and bloody mêlée between the Germans and the Canadians in the communication trenches, the former trying to press on and rush the support line and the latter trying to build blocks down the communication trenches to stave them off until that line could be fully manned. At one time the Princess Patricia's in the communication trench, though attacked across the open simultaneously on both sides, resisted the enemy, thus emulating the traditions of the famous British regiment which,

when attacked from behind, simply turned its rear rank about and fired in both directions.

In the meantime, Captain Niven, some hundred yards to the north-west, was still clinging to the knoll of trenches in the front line amid an encircling tide of Germans. As has been already stated, his right-hand platoon had been destroyed by the bombardment, and Lieut. Hagerty, its commander, killed. Lieut. Molson then took charge, and with great gallantry dug out some of the men buried alive, although the trench was ranged to a nicety. He was shot through the jaw, and the section was

abandoned in the end. Lieut. Triggs, in the nearest sector, was severely wounded soon afterwards, and Lieut. Irwin, the only remaining subaltern, was hit later on in the day. Captain Niven, though hit himself, continued to command and move about, as he was by this time the only remaining officer of his company. The telephone dug-out was smashed in and all communication with the battalion lost. None the less, two heroic runners managed to get through and to report that the company were still holding out. Some of the worst cases of wounded were even carried back by the stretcher-bearers under an appalling fire to the support line.



WHERE FURY SHATTERED SKY AND EARTH

Before the German Infantry assaulted the sector lying between Hill 60 and Hooze on June 2, 1916, the hideous vomit of their guns tore up the earth for several hours, shattering the trenches and surrounding ground which the Canadian troops so gallantly strove to hold. Here is Hill 62, which lay in the sector. Though the photograph was taken three years after the Armistice, the scarred earth carries clear evidence of the fury of the guns which Lord Beaverbrook describes so vividly in this chapter.

Antony of Ypres

At dusk (June 2, 9 p.m.) Lieut. Glascoe was sent up from battalion headquarters, and Captain Niven handed over his command and attempted to go back and report to battalion headquarters. In the course of his wanderings he came to a dressing station, and after his wound had been dressed started once more for his isolated company, which after eighteen hours was still left among the encircling Germans as lonely as the survivors of the Flood on Mount Ararat. He was promptly hit again in the breast.

THE attack still continued to spread up to our left. Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon the extreme German right had come up to assault

our extreme left at Hooze. Two attacks were, however, repulsed with great loss to the enemy by the Royal Canadian Regiment.

June 2, 2 p.m.-3 p.m. None the less, the position at three o'clock was one of the very gravest danger. On a frontage of three battalions the Germans had overwhelmed our front and right support lines on the crest of the ridge, and annihilated or decimated the defending regiments. From Maple Copse [held by the Canadian Mounted Rifles] they could be seen advancing in strong force on the high ground of Observatory Ridge into the very heart of our position, and they were also attacking farther north down the various communication trenches which led to the support line

(These bodies were unquestionably strong German patrols.)

Our left at Hooze had held firm, but it was now utterly in the air, save for Captain Niven and his men, and the triumphant enemy were rapidly sweeping behind that line of defence. The support trenches having been taken on Hill 62 and Mount Sorrel, there was nothing in front of the German left and centre except the Apex line to Maple Copse.

IT was, therefore, a matter of life and death to hold on to these left-hand support trenches to the Apex and to Maple Copse. But the line was very weakly held for the task of resisting 2,000 Germans attacking from higher ground and flushed with victory. There were, in fact, about three companies of the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles, the remains of the 1st and 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, perhaps a hundred all told, and what was left of three companies of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.



SHORT OF INCHES BUT STOUT OF HEART

The men of the Canadian Army were of fine physique, but among them there was one young man who, though stout of heart, lacked the inches of a fighting soldier. The boy seen above enlisted at Vancouver in November 1914, and eventually arrived with the Canadian Contingent on the Western Front. He was too young to fight, but he is here seen back-chatting, with all the aplomb which had carried him through his great adventure, to a Canadian trooper. An exchange of hats—helmet for cloth cap—makes him, for the moment, a fighting soldier.

Canadian Records



FAR FROM HOME YET FAR FROM WAR

These Canadian soldiers are just a few of the great army which, by the autumn of 1916, numbered 370,000 enlisted men. At the end of the war the Canadian casualties numbered over 215,000, and by 1918 Canada had raised over 600,000 soldiers, or over 13 per cent. of her male population. These men of a Canadian regiment are on their way to the front, and their last night's rest in bell tents, seen in the background, will soon be exchanged for trench life. This photograph affords an interesting comparison with that in page 36, taken just two years earlier.

Canadian Records

Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

(Continued from page 11 of this wrapper)

would be very pleased indeed to hear of some of the "lads of the Old Brigade."

MR. D. WOLFE, of Westcliff-on-Sea, who wrote to me before, has found more details about the Château near Braine which was used as an advance dressing station. Readers may remember that the photograph of this Château, which appeared in page 136 of Part 3 of I WAS THERE, was used very naturally as an illustration in association with Dr Martin's chapter on the work of the Field Ambulance of the 5th Division, when the Marne was crossed. Mr. Wolfe now tells me:

"I remember Dr. Martin's 6th Field Ambulance being there, as my own 5th Field Ambulance relieved them. This Château was owned by a French nobleman, and the stables attached which were most elaborately decorated, were the home of several well-known race-horses. About two kilometres away is Soupir, which also had a Château. I was informed that this was the home of ex-Premier Caillaux. But I never saw this place, so can offer no description. I was told that the Premier had some wonderful pieces of tapestry hanging on the walls."

"Referring to the Ypres action, I am sure now that the action fought by the R.E.s, was Nov. 11th. I also remember the Oct 31st incident, and I shall be very pleased to hear from any of the men belonging to this unit. They were the finest lot of men that I ever mixed with. There were two officers in this charge, I believe their names were Major North and Lt. Collins; the latter, I think, got killed. I am eagerly looking forward to other issues of I WAS THERE: I may possibly recognize more places of interest."

So I imagine will many another reader week by week as our collection of war-time photographs, so many of which have not previously been published, grows to completion.

A MOST extraordinary story comes to me from a postman in Belfast—a story for which I may be able to find room in detail in our Supplement at the end of the work. Mr. George Waltho tells me how, in 1918, during the great German "push," his company of Irish Rifles (he was at first in the Post Office Rifles) was surrounded near St. Quentin and heavily outnumbered. They ceased fire, and despite the fact that they threw down their arms they were shot down in cold blood. He himself was shot by a German officer at a range of two yards, the bullet entering four inches under his heart. The amazing fact is that not only did Mr. Waltho

survive and become a prisoner of war, but the bullet remained where the German automatic placed it until August 1938! As a proof of his story he sends me the actual bullet—one of his most treasured souvenirs of the Great War! It appears to have come from a German Mauser automatic pistol. Mr. Waltho signs himself "The Lucky Bloke," and he certainly has every reason for adopting that title.

I HAVE had several letters commenting and enlarging upon the story given by Sir Edward Hulse in Part 7 of the amazing Christmas Armistice of 1914. One from an R.E., whose Division was on the right of the 7th Division to which Sir Edward Hulse belonged, recounts a very similar experience indeed. His letter is of such interest that I quote it practically in full:

"With reference to the article taken from the letters of the late Captain Sir Edward Hulse, Bart., 2nd Bn. Scots Guards, 7th Division, appearing in your 7th part, in which he said how he noticed the signs of an Unofficial Armistice around the trenches about 8.30 a.m. on Christmas morning, 1914.

"It may interest you to know that I was one of a small party of ten R.E.s who entered the trenches of the 1st Bn. Royal Irish Rifles, 8th Division, to the right of the 7th about 8 p.m. on the Christmas Eve. Whilst making our way to a selected point to commence sapping towards the German trenches, a succession of fancy lights started coming over from their lines to ours. These were not Verrey lights as I remember it. At the same time the enemy were constantly calling out to this effect, 'Don't fire, it's Xmas; if you don't, we won't come over and talk.'"

"After a while a private of the R.I. Rifles went over (it was quite dark) and I saw him come back with a box of cigars to himself. In a short while numbers of our men were meeting the Germans in 'No Man's Land,' chatting, walking about together and exchanging what they could in the form of smokes and food. After a short while our sapping was done from beyond our parapet in 'No Man's Land' in full view of the enemy and I myself to this day still possess the Field post card written by a German soldier whilst I held his torch, wishing me 'a happy Xmas' thereon."

"The point I wish to make is, as this happened some two hours before midnight Xmas Eve, 1914, it was some hours in advance of the happenings which Sir Edward Hulse records as on Xmas morning with the Scots Guards."

Just as I write these notes, a letter arrives from another reader, a Rifleman of the 6th Division, giving me still further details about the Christmas Eve Armistice. I shall hope to make room for his letter in this page in a later Part.

Old Comrades' Corner

These brief notes afford an opportunity for comrades of the Great War to get into touch with one another. Any reader of I WAS THERE who wishes to hear of his old comrades on any Front in the Great War should send details to the Editor to be published in this "Corner," stating whether he wishes his own address to be printed.

CORPORAL J. T. B. CRAIG, M.M., Bombardier-Signaller, "D" Battery, 50th Brigade, 9th Scottish Division, Member of the Artillery Association, Glasgow, would like to meet or hear of any old 50th Brigade R.F.A. or 66th Division men. Replies care of the Editor.

D. WOLFE, R.A.M.C., No. 1604, No. 5 Field Ambulance, would like to hear of any survivors of the 5th Field Company R.E.s who fought in the action of November 11, 1914, against the Prussian Guards.

PRIVATE A. W. GREENWOOD, No. 2638, and also No. 50900 of the 46th (N.M.) Division, and also the 2nd Lincoln 8th and 21st Division, would like to hear of old Lincolnshire comrades.

SERGEANT SHARLAND, M.M., late of 14th Siege Battery, R.C.A., would be pleased to hear from old comrades of 14th Siege Battery. Address: 142, East Acton Lane, W.3.

LEONARD STOREY, late R.F.A., and other R.F.A. men want the present address of, or other information concerning, Gunner Darbyshire, who fought with "L" Battery at Nery, September 1, 1914.

JAMES DILLEY, late Sergeant R.A.S.C., wants to hear from the two A.S.C. men shown in the upper photograph in page 101, Part Three. One served in the same office as Mr. Dilley, namely the A.A.G. Headquarters Line of Communication; the other was in the A.Q.M.G.

D. A. JOHNSON, late of the 21st Division, wants to hear of survivors of that Division.

WILLIAM GOODMAN, late of the 4th Troop, C Squadron, 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards, No. 6834, wants to hear of any survivors of the Squadron, particularly any who were in action on August 22, 1914.

PRIVATE F. GRIMSTER, 1st East Surreys, No. 7938 (Old Con.), wants to hear from old comrades. Address: 84, Lansdowne Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11.

PRIVATE W. WYATT, Reg. No. 203543, "D" Coy., 9th Sherwood Foresters, would be glad to hear from old pals. Address: 103, Elmington Road, Camberwell, London, S.E.5.

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